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BALLET

TODAY

JUNE, 1960

TWO SHILLINGS



MAYA PLISETSKAYA OF THE BOLSHOI BALLET
whose career is featured in this issue

Ballet

TODAY

A MONTHLY REVIEW

DEVOTED TO DANCE

Established 1946

THE MAGAZINE WITH THE WIDEST NEWS COVERAGE OF BALLET
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Our Critics:

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No. 15

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Maya Plisetskaya, featured in our *Careers in Pictures* series this month, is seen here as Odette in *Swan Lake*.

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Editor's Log

Right: Dancers from Thailand as they appear in the film *Wonderful World*



I SIMPLY could not think why the Coca-Cola Export Corporation should invite me to a reception at the National Film Theatre, but knowing from experience that many interesting events develop from the most unlikely sources, I was sufficiently curious to go along to see what possible connection Coca-Cola could have with ballet.

But it turned out that this organisation is one of the growing group of business firms with an interest in the cultural side of life, and the reception followed the showing of a film entitled "Wonderful World."

The reason for making this film was explained in the prologue. "From the earliest edges of recorded time, people have sought to make more of their lives than satisfying the everyday necessities of food and drink, clothing and shelter. The universal desire for something beautiful, something ordered and in good taste is expressed in architecture, the arts, sports, the varying patterns of hospitality. In these designs for living, there are impressive parallels everywhere in this truly wonderful world". The reason I had been asked along soon became apparent, for the film included dances of ten countries, from the Samba in Rio de Janeiro to Aztec dancing in Mexico City. Dances of Spain, Thailand, Japan, and the famous Tinikling of the Philippines were all seen to the greatest advantage in their own environment.

"Wonderful World" runs for 43 minutes, is in colour, shot in 16 mm., visits 31 countries, and took three camera crews 14 months to film. They travelled 190,000 miles; shot more than seven miles of film footage; used a cast of over a thousand; directed action in 23 different languages and dealt in 19 currencies. The music was recorded in Rome by a 56-piece orchestra. The commentary has been translated into eight different languages, including two versions of English—one for North America and one for Britain and the Commonwealth, and is available for free showing to interested organisations. Further information can be obtained from: Miss R. Stalker, Public Relations Department, The Coca-Cola Export Corporation, 199 Knightsbridge, London, S.W.7. In fact every year the other films



Photo (left to right): Mira Sanina, dancer, Dušan Ristic, designer, of the Belgrade Ballet Company and Estelle Herf, Ballet Today Editor, outside the Café de Paris. See MONTE CARLO.

Photo: J. R. Farrington

they have made are shown by the Bottlers of Coca-Cola to audiences totalling many thousands—youth organisations, church groups, business groups, schools, factory canteens, hospitals and universities.

The Coca-Cola Export Corporation say they have great faith in the value of films as a medium for the creation of international understanding and goodwill, and pursuing this belief they have sponsored many which they feel are of interest and of value to the community. Although their product appears in the film from time to time, it is only in the normal course of events, and no attempt is made at advertising.

The Corporation are to be complimented on this new addition to their library of films (which includes such subjects as the Boy Scouts, Melbourne Olympic Games, and

a visit to the Brussels World Fair in 1958), but more particularly for using some of their vast resources to bring a little beauty into the lives of their fellow men.

The refreshments which followed included every kind of drink—including Coca-Cola.

My next engagement was to have been located in the cellar of "Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese" in Fleet Street and in case you think I spend my time staggering from one round of drinks to another, I hasten to explain that this was a press conference called to enable Maurice Béjart to discuss the visit of the four ballet companies—comprising over 60 dancers—which he had brought over to Sadler's Wells Theatre for a week of ballet beginning April 18th (reviewed elsewhere in this issue).

(Continued on next page)

OUR JULY ISSUE WILL BE PUBLISHED ON 30th JUNE



Editor's Log

CONTINUED

Béjart's arrangements in London seem fated to be upset by current events in Britain, his season last July did not take place because of the printing dispute, and this time the press conference to which I had been summoned was cancelled because it conflicted with "the Budget Speech and the visit of General de Gaulle." Which seems to me to prove that either the Sadler's Wells Theatre organisation, or Béjart himself, has a healthy twentieth-century approach to the value of publicity, often sadly lacking in ballet.

Another conference was called later and of course the season took place, but by that time I had left for my usual spring pilgrimage to that Mecca of ballet people—Monte Carlo—and I was sorry to have missed both.

MONTE CARLO is like Piccadilly Circus, if you wait there long enough you are bound to meet someone you know. In April when the markets are full of stately Easter lilies, and the egg-woman paints a face on each egg and tops it with a headscarf, then, without doubt, you will encounter dancers in the picturesque streets or sipping coffee outside the Café de Paris.

This year the major attraction for the season at Easter was the Belgrade Ballet Company (reviewed by our Monte Carlo correspondent elsewhere in this issue.)

Milorad Miskovitch is one of those people who seem to turn up everywhere, and sure enough he was there on the opening night to watch both the Company with whom he had started as a boy of fifteen, and its star Dusana Sifnios (who is to join Miskovitch's own Company for about a year, returning to dance with the Belgrade Ballet for any special events).

I was very impressed by the Belgrade Ballet's production of *Le Mandarin Merveilleux* and went back stage to meet Dušan Ristić, responsible for the decor of four of the six ballets given during the Company's four-day season. This artist is equally at home in designing the sinister quarters where lurk the thugs ready to dispose of the victims lured in by their accomplice (Dusana Sifnios), in *Mandarin* or in *Giselle* Act 2 (also danced by Sifnios) where his conception of the leafy glade with its background of misty spires showed a very real feeling for the period of the ballet.

Dancers everywhere have their own

"bush telegraph system," so that I was not surprised to hear that Christl Zimmerl and Karl Musil of the Vienna Opera who had arrived in Nice that day to rehearse at the Opera House for the one-night-only première of Dimitri Parlic's new ballet *Manfred*, were coming over to Monte Carlo that evening to see the Belgrade dancers. We all met during the performance and made quite a gathering, between us we spoke five languages, sometimes all at once.

Ballerina Marina Svetlova once told me that Walter Terry the American critic followed the routine of the dancers, going to rehearsal with an empty stomach and staying the course with them throughout the long hard sessions which precede all new creations. Later in the week as I watched Parlic rehearsing the Nice corps de ballet (who were to accompany the Viennese dancers) going over every small detail again and again, I wished it could be made compulsory for all critics to follow Terry's example. I thought of them settling into their comfortable seats on the night of the première. How many, I wondered, would use up all their column space with a harangue about the ballet, dismissing the work of the dancers with only a very brief notice.

News from here and there

LONDON

RUSSIAN TALKS

Serge Lifar and Arnold Haskell gave talks at The Pushkin Club, London. The former (7th April) on "Pushkin, the Sun of Russia" (in Russian, with translation), and the latter on May 10th on "Some Russian Ballerinas."

SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS

The Society of Russian Style Ballet Schools, of which Svetlana Beriosova is the patron, held examinations throughout the month of May. Miss Beriosova is to present certificates to successful candidates early in June. Miss P. Ross the Hon. Sec., Miss Anna Lendrum, Miss Claire Linden, Mrs. Nina Hubbard, Miss Patricia Spalding and Madame Maria Zybina are all founder members, having severed their connection with the Federation of Russian Classical Ballet at the beginning of this year.

STOCKHOLM

NIJINSKY PRIZE

Premier dancer and choreographer Björn Holmgren, of the Royal Swedish Opera, has been awarded this year's Nijinsky Prize, which is regarded as the world's most outstanding recognition for choreographic work. At a ceremony after a performance at the Stockholm Opera the prize was presented to Mr. Holmgren by Serge Lifar, head of the Choreographic Institute in Paris.

Björn Holmgren became premier dancer at the Opera in 1946 and has since then been its leading male dancer. He has also made several guest performances abroad and in 1956 he studied American ballet in the U.S. His first success as a choreographer came in 1958 with the ballet *Swedish Rhapsody* to the music of the Swedish composer, Hugo Alfvén.

A novel ballet, *The Rites*, by another internationally known Swedish choreographer, Birgit Akeson, had its première at the Stockholm Opera in March. The music was composed by Ingvar Lidholm, and the libretto by Erik Lindegren, who also wrote the libretto for the opera "Aniara." *The Rites* will be performed at the Stockholm Festival this summer.

AMERICA

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

In honour of the twentieth anniversary of the American Ballet Theatre, American magazine "Dance Perspectives" is devoting its spring issue to a history of the company.

The 136-page magazine contains a chronology of all works produced by Ballet Theatre since its founding—a total of 109.

Along with full factual data on all premières, with listings of original casts, are excerpts from contemporary reviews. There are also summary reviews of each season, selected from comments by critics both here and abroad. Seen together, the data and the reviews provide a documentary history of the company.

In addition, the magazine contains complete lists of Ballet Theatre personnel for each season and information on its extensive tours. Dancers, ballets, choreographers, composers and designers are indexed for easy reference.

"The American Ballet Theatre: 1940-1960" has been compiled by Selma Jeanne Cohen and A. J. Pischl. Karl Leabo has designed a twenty-four page portfolio of photographs of outstanding ballets and performances.

"Dance Perspectives" is available at 1801 East 26th Street, Brooklyn 29, N.Y. A year's subscription is \$6.00.

STRAVINSKY-BALANCHINE ON TV

Composer Igor Stravinsky and choreographer George Balanchine, on commission from the CBS Television Network, will create a contemporary music and dance work based on the Biblical story of Noah.

Stravinsky will also conduct the orchestra for the world première on television of this mixed theatrical work for orchestra, narrator and dancers. The dancers will be leading members of the New York City Ballet.

PERU

FESTIVAL BALLET HONOURED

At the close of their visit to Peru, London's Festival Ballet has been honoured by the President. Dr. Julian Braunschwag, director-general, and Anton Dolin, artistic director, were awarded "The Order of the Sun"—Peru's highest decoration.

The President saw the ballet twice.



With the Queen at his side, President Charles De Gaulle of France acknowledges the cheers of the audience at the gala performance of ballet given for him and Madame De Gaulle—seen talking to the Duke of Edinburgh on right—at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London. Left, in the Royal Box, are Princess Margaret and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. Seen in background just left of the Duke of Edinburgh is Mr. Antony Armstrong-Jones. Extreme right is the Duchess of Kent.



LONDON REVIEWS

by FERNAU HALL

THE ROYAL BALLET

ROYAL COMMAND GALA PERFORMANCE

THE planning of the front-of-house arrangements of the gala performance at Covent Garden (the climax of President de Gaulle's three-day state visit) was nothing less than superb. Of course they have a long tradition of this sort of thing at Covent Garden: I was intrigued to see, hanging on the wall of the corridor outside the stalls, a series of programmes of previous state visits by Presidents of the French Republic in the first decade of this century: the brilliantly coloured silk programme of the performance on 7th April this year was in fact very similar to the silk programmes of the years before the first world war. The main change—and a very significant one—was to be found in the fact that the present programme dealt with a performance of ballet, whereas the earlier ones gave details of opera performances.

Conscious of the fact that the important action would take place in front of the curtain, I took up a strategic position behind a glass-paned door facing the main foyer. For half an hour I watched the corp diplomatique and assorted generals, admirals and politicians arrive; also a bishop arrayed in such splendid purple that he put the other men to shame, even though they glittered with orders and shone with sashes. The ladies wore tiaras almost to a lady. Then a number of gentlemen ushers began to fit together pieces of wood to make wands; the television cameramen became very active on their platforms on either side, and Richard Dimbleby (awesome in tails)

disappeared: it was clear the Queen was about to arrive. At this point a man at my side carrying a microphone asked if he could take my place for a broadcast: I pushed back a few inches, he slipped in front of me, the Queen and the President appeared, and I found myself in the odd position of looking at something and at the same time hearing it described by a voice at my very ear. It was a disturbing but memorable experience: the pageantry seemed to gain another dimension.

Then I hurried to my seat in the middle of the stalls: the perspicacious Press Department had put me where I could get a good view of the enormous Royal Box (magnificent in maroon hangings and masses of carnations, in the centre of the Royal Circle) rather than in my usual seat in the Stalls Circle. The curtains parted to reveal a stage filled with the bright-coloured uniforms of eight trumpeters of the Household Cavalry and a large number of guardsmen—bandmen; they played a fanfare, and the royal party entered the box: the timing was perfect, and the effect tremendous.

On such occasions it rarely happens that the stage spectacle is as exciting in its own way as the front-of-house pageantry, and this was certainly not true on 7th April. The *idea* of selecting a programme of ballets with strong connections with France was excellent; unfortunately the items chosen were not the best of those available. Instead of *Coppélia* Act I with Anya Linden, we might have hoped

Continued at foot of next page

LE BAISER DE LA FÉE

THE decision to commission a production of *Le Baiser de la Fée* from Kenneth Macmillan was a strange one, in view of the fact that this ballet represented Ashton's first large-scale production for the Sadler's Wells Ballet before the war: the obvious thing would have been to commission a new version of the ballet from Ashton—particularly in view of the fact that both the story and the music are relatively traditional, whereas Macmillan has made his name through his inventiveness and the oddness of his approach to ballet. Nevertheless this decision paid off handsomely: the new *Baiser* is better than Ashton's 1935 version in a number of ways, and is by far the finest thing Macmillan has done for years, containing in fact some dances which are better choreographically than anything he has yet done. One might almost say this ballet was for him what *La Fille Mal Gardée* was for Ashton: finding himself provided with a well-constructed story and music to match, Macmillan has done far better than when working on a theme of his own. It was interesting—and possibly significant—that he showed little apparent nostalgia for the avant-garde gimmicks of his earlier ballets, adopting a style which was for much of the time very close to that of Petipa, and establishing himself as quite at home in this style. Such a style fits the music reasonably well—for Stravinsky intended his score as a tribute to Tchaikovsky, and went so far as to base several of the movements on actual themes by Tchaikovsky.

Choreographically speaking the most effective passage was the sequence of dances of the Fiancée and the Young Man at the beginning of Scene 3 ("At the Mill"): on the first night (12th April) both the pas de deux and the Fiancée's solo evoked applause—and it gives a fair measure of the nineteenth-century quality of this ballet that this seemed quite natural. (Such a thing would be unimaginable in other Stravinsky ballets). Kenneth Macmillan has a marked sympathy for very young and naïve characters, and working with Lynn Seymour he created a role of soft, dewy innocence—comparable in some ways to the role he created for Susan Salomon some years ago in the B.B.C. television ballet *Punch and the Child*. Cleverly he avoided all the types of movement (such as fast turns) which give Lynn Seymour trouble, and exploited her best qualities—notably her suppleness. Fortunately for her, the role did not make any great demands on her dramatic ability: she was chiefly required to look young and happy—and this she did very easily, looking more at home than in any previous role. She failed to make much of the passage in the final scene where (I quote the programme) "the fiancée, lonely and sad, looks in vain for her lost love": at this point the memory of a teenage Margot Fonteyn with the beginnings of marvellous dramatic expressiveness insisted on obtruding. But Lynn Seymour's ineffectiveness here was not entirely her fault: Macmillan's choreography in fact gave her little support.

Donald Macleary was also seen to better advantage than ever before, showing a new forcefulness and attack which were particularly obvious in the solo which followed the Fiancée's solo at the beginning of Act II. There was no special characterisation inherent in the steps (which fell into familiar patterns), and in fact the role as a whole was quite conventional; but it was very satisfying to see Donald Macleary breaking away from the slightly monotonous softness which has characterised much of his work so far. With his striking good looks and graceful style he made an appropriate hero for a fairy-tale.

Beriosova was equally well cast as the Fairy, combining the authority and lyricism of her Lilac Fairy and the slightly eerie coldness of Armida. Nothing she had to do went outside the role, and all her enchainements gave opportunities to her fine command of sustained and extended movements—particularly in her numerous pas de deux with the Young Man. Equally one might say that nothing she was given to do went inside the role: everything was smooth, graceful and almost neutral, so that one had the feeling of seeing a Beriosova anthology. (At times the reverence which Macmillan showed for the work of his predecessors was rather obtrusive—as when the Fairy stood in the middle of the stage calling on her creatures to dance in very much the same way that the Firebird calls to the dance the minions

of Koschei). At only one point did Macmillan attempt one of the clever lifts characteristic of his best work in the past: this was in a pas de deux in which the Fairy brought her legs, one after the other, high over the Young Man's shoulder. Significantly enough, this seemed quite out of place, and even looked awkward in the context of this ballet.

Musically speaking this ballet differs fundamentally from the other Stravinsky ballets, which are distinguished by their economy and superb balance. *Baiser* lasts 45 minutes (which is rather too long for such a slender story) and a great deal of the music is in the same mood: gentle and lyrical, in medium tempo, with single instruments playing a simple melody against a discreet accompaniment. It is hard to guess what exactly was in Stravinsky's mind when he wrote this music for Ida Rubinstein in 1928, with Nijinska as choreographer, taking as his basis the well-known fairy-tale by Hans Christian Andersen. The score carries a dedication to the memory of Tchaikovsky, linking his muse to the fairy of the ballet and making clear that it is at least partly intended as an allegory of Tchaikovsky's life: "the muse has also marked him with her fatal kiss, the mysterious mark of which made itself felt in the whole of the work of the great artist." Stravinsky has great veneration for Tchaikovsky, and it was perhaps a sympathetic feeling for Tchaikovsky's tragic fate which caused him to put such stress on tender, quiet, elegiac moods in his score. At Covent Garden the music—admirably conducted by Colin Davis, who has deep understanding of Stravinsky—sounded much better than it used to do in the bathroom acoustics of pre-war Sadler's Wells; but the ballet would have held the stage better if there had been more contrasts in the music.

Kenneth Rowell's settings had several defects. One was rather surprising at Covent Garden: the settings were too contemporary! Several contemporary styles were prominent—notably abstract expressionism (à la Jackson Pollock) and surrealism (à la Yves Tanguy)—and these styles clashed very strongly with the nineteenth-century romanticism of the story, the music and the choreography. Another defect of the settings was that they were much too fussy and detailed, so that solo dancers tended to get lost against them. No less distracting was the fact that the settings progressed from almost pure abstraction to a final scene in which there was a relatively clear evocation of a romantic landscape, with islands lying in a lake. In fact the settings should have progressed in the opposite direction, with relatively figurative backcloths for Scene 2 ("A Village Fête") and Scene 3 ("At the Mill") and an abstract cloth for the final scene ("The Lullaby of the Land Beyond Time and Place"). A fourth defect was the use of the same straight gauze legs painted in warm colours for all the scenes: though rather lacking in poetry these did well enough for most of the ballet, but were very distracting in Scene 1 ("The Lullaby in the Storm").

Nevertheless Kenneth Rowell must be given credit for showing himself aware of what is going on in the international art world and coming to grips with the theme with vigour and inventiveness. Taking up an idea from Tamayo's use of stage lighting in *Antigone*, he arranged the colours of the cloths so that he was able to produce major changes in atmosphere and composition by changes in the colour of the upstage lighting.

His costumes were in general more in harmony with the period of the ballet than his settings, and one or two were excellent—notably that of the Fairy. But most of the girls' costumes were ruined by an awkward skirt length—in fact they ended just at the knee, thus breaking the line of the leg—and there were some appalling head-dresses for men which looked like horns, bringing up connotations which had nothing to do with the story. (Surely he did not wish to suggest that they were all cuckolds?).

Unfortunately *Baiser de La Fée* was preceded in the programme by *La Fête Etrange*, a ballet with a somewhat similar story line (incorporating a broken wedding) and almost exactly the same musical handicaps (lack of contrast, etc.). These two ballets should at all costs be prevented from meeting in the same programme.

ROYAL COMMAND GALA PERFORMANCE (Continued from previous page)

to see *Giselle* Act I with Margot Fonteyn—*Giselle*, with its Perrot-Coralli choreography, being far more French than the Ivanov-Cecchetti *Coppélia*; and instead of Massine's *Mam'zelle Angot* with Merle Park we might have hoped to see this great artist in a far more rewarding role in part of *La Fille Mal Gardée*. This latter ballet, being Ashton's finest for a long time, would also have made a much more appropriate tribute to France than his dreary *La Valse* (which in fact brought the gala programme to a tepid close). Clearly those who planned the programme did so with the limited aim of including as many French names as possible—whether composers, designers or choreographers—without taking much account of the quality of the items they selected.

Two things stood out strongly. One was Margot Fonteyn's dancing in a pas de deux from *The Sleeping Beauty*. Rising to the occasion—and no doubt inspired by her well-known love for France—she danced with even more than her usual tenderness and radiance: generations of great French and Russian dancers seemed to dance with her as she made her own tribute to the Entente Cordiale. The other outstanding feature of the programme was Colin Davis' conducting of Ravel's *La Valse*: this made the music shimmer with all its proper impressionistic mystery, and suggested what a contribution this fine young conductor can make to the art of ballet if he is given the opportunity to do so.

ANYA LINDEN'S GISELLE

It was intriguing to see Anya Linden's *Giselle* on 2nd April—not only because one could see how it had developed since she first danced this role last year, but also because one could compare it with the *Giselles* of various young soloists who are coming to the fore.

What stood out at once is that Linden's *Giselle* is—for good or ill—entirely different from anyone else's. She has an individual style of moving on the stage which appears with the utmost clarity in everything she does—whether she is dancing or miming, and whatever the period, the choreographic style or the character to be interpreted. This quick, brittle, bird-like style is very twentieth-century, and so when it is applied to such an intensely period role as *Giselle* the result is often rather odd. At the same time it has its own curious charm, and there were times when the complete anachronism of her dancing and acting forced one to see new facets of *Giselle*—in the same way that a performance of a Shakespeare play in modern dress gives fresh meaning to some of the lines.

The trouble with such a style is that eventually it produces an effect of monotony. One of the most striking characteristics of great dancers is their flexibility; when bird-like quickness is required, they produce it, but they are equally responsive when the choreography and the dramatic situation require something quite different. This Anya Linden has not yet learned to do. There was one moment which showed that she has potentialities not yet fully developed: when she had to mime an invitation to the Duke and the Princess to sit at the table, she did it with a sustained slow movement that was right in style and completely effective. Elsewhere, however, she showed little understanding of the sustained moving-through-treacle quality essential in adage.

As always, she kept giving the impression of racing ahead of the music, and failed to fill out the phrases; nevertheless she managed to avoid going right out of time throughout Act 1. Things did not go so well in Act 2 (perhaps because the strain of fighting against the music was beginning to tell) and she ended one fast solo almost a beat ahead.

By some ironical accident of casting this same performance of *Giselle* included a fabulous interpretation of the female half of the *pas de trois* by Merle Park, one of the most musical dancers in the world. She sported in the music like a dolphin in the sea, presenting us with her own accents deliciously offset against the accents of the music. The contrast between the two styles could scarcely have been more instructive: I was reminded of a performance of *Swan Lake* during Beriosova's first year at the Garden when she was cast as a leading swan, and showed just what was wrong with the performance of the title role by a ballerina of the time.

CUADRO FLAMENCO AT ST. PANCRAS

ON 6th April, as part of the Seventh Guitar Festival organised by the Fretted Instrument Guild at St. Pancras Town Hall, Antonio and Chelita presented a cuadro flamenco in pure gypsy style which added a valuable element to an already varied programme. (Amateurs of the guitar seem to find it quite natural to hear in succession items such as pure jazz, classical music from the 17th and 18th centuries, Scottish folk songs, and flamenco music: never having heard such variety at a single concert, I found this very stimulating.)

Four items were outstanding in the cuadro flamenco: a flamenco guitar solo by Antonio Navarro (with exciting percussion accompaniment produced by the guitarist striking the body of his instrument); a cante flamenco song by Diego Rodriguez; and two dance solos distinguished by their oriental quality. One was a Soleares ending in a Bulerias performed by Rosandro (of the celebrated Amaya tribe) with strange and fascinating hand movements (with pointed fingers) that came closer to Indian mudras than anything I have yet seen in a flamenco dance. Rosandro has a style of his own, quite unlike that of anyone else: subtle, ironic, off-beat, with an intriguing hint of delicacy behind the characteristic flamenco violence. The other outstanding dance item was a Zambra Mora performed by Chelita Navarro in bare feet, wearing *chinchinas* (tiny cymbals) between her fingers. This particular dance with its uncouth, barbaric quality (quite unlike that of most flamenco) takes one back to the remote origins of the gypsies in North India well over a thousand years ago: it proved very well suited to Chelita Navarro's physique and temperament.

MABEL RYAN AWARD

This year there were over 60 entries in the Junior Award section (under 13) of the Mabel Ryan competition of the Cecchetti Society; but these were cut down by Maryon Lane to a "short list" of 15 for the final judging on 9th April at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre. The standard among the fifteen was really creditable, and the task of the judges (Alicia Markova assisted by Maryon Lane) was far from easy. But their job was made simpler for them by the intelligently constructed set dance arranged by Lilian Thomas: this was technically well within the powers of the competitors, but demanded real artistry at certain points—notably the beginning (with hand movements somewhat like those of the *Bluebird*) and the ending (where the dancer, seated on the stage, had to bring her arm down expressively.)



Lynn Seymour and Donald Macleary in the new Kenneth Macmillan ballet *Le Baiser de la Fée*. Photo: Houston Rogers

In fact certain dancers stood out from the others through their artistry—making the unusual movements come to life by the way they timed them and by the elegance of their line. This was true of three pupils of Nesta Brooking (Sarah Aubrey, Sarah Perry and Fiona Fairrie), each of whom covered the stage with fine broad movements, and made the opening "Bluebird" movement admirably suggestive of fluttering wings. The artistry of a tiny girl looking no more than ten (Julian Williams, pupil of Hilary and Meriel Fry) was even more striking: at times she smiled with the most obvious and satisfying enjoyment of what she was doing, but altered her facial expressions, the look of her eyes and the line of her head in the most subtle and imaginative way to harmonise with the movements of her arms and legs at each point, and in general suggested very clearly that she may become a great dancer when she grows up. Alicia Markova awarded the first prize to Sarah Aubrey—which was fair enough, since this fine young artist showed much more control than Julian Williams, and built up the dance with warmth and fine musicality; but I think a special award for promise should have gone to Julian Williams. Wendy Bluemel (pupil of Diana Barker) was runner-up.

The general standard was inevitably much lower in the senior section (11–13) for here there had been no weeding-out; but this section was graced by a stunning solo from Ann Whitley (pupil of Nesta Brooking). This remarkable artist has gained steadily in assurance and beauty as her dancing has matured, and now she takes the stage with the radiance of a young ballerina. In fact her remarkable sense of phrasing and perfection of line were already clearly apparent in the preliminary class, in which she danced certain enchainements with an absolute perfection which is very rare, even among the greatest dancers. Perhaps her most remarkable achievement at present is her co-ordination of arm and leg movements: this is so superb that she can give meaning, beauty and a strange sort of abstract but warm emotion to the simplest classroom step. Her performance of the set dance won a well-deserved ovation from an expert audience consisting largely of teachers and dancers.

Incomprehensibly, Alicia Markova awarded the prize to Lynn Wallis (pupil of Irene Kinsey), who showed a solid technique and good schooling, but was hard and somewhat lacking in grace. Ann Whitley was made runner-up.

with

Ballet of Maurice Béjart

Western Theatre Ballet

and dancers from

The Ballet Company of Janine Charrat



Left: Maurice Béjart in the title role of his ballet *Orphée*.

DURING the week beginning Easter Monday the 'ballet' groups of the Brussels Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie (including the Ballet-Théâtre de Maurice Béjart, the Western Theatre Ballet, members of the Janine Charrat Ballet and the Ballet du TRM) appeared at the Sadler's Wells Theatre as part of an exchange with the Sadler's Wells Opera (which visits the TRM in Brussels for one week and then appears in the Paris International Festival with the TRM ballet groups).

The season opened with a Stravinsky double bill symbolising the exchange: the Sadler's Wells Opera in its magnificent production of the opera *Oedipus Rex* (produced by Michel St. Denis) and Béjart's production of *Le Sacre du Printemps* bringing together all the ballet groups of the TRM. It seems fantastic that we had to wait until this occasion for a further performance of *Oedipus Rex* (which should in fact stand at the head of the Sadler's Wells repertoire) but the performance of the opera was no less welcome on that account.

The contrast between the two halves of the programme could hardly have been more violent. In the opera we saw good taste, imagination, profound understanding of the myth, and reverence for the ideas of the composer, deployed by one of the greatest producers of the century; in the ballet we saw choreography by a man with no feeling for style or expression and an irresponsible attitude to the ideas of the composer. The story of the ballet is perfectly clear and straightforward: it represents a Spring ritual in prehistoric times. In the first act the members of the tribe, under the direction of an old magician, dance their adoration of the earth. Act II shows the selection of the virgin for the sacrifice, rites preceding the sacrifice, and finally the great dance of the Chosen Virgin which culminates in her death. Béjart chose to dream up a story of his own and fit it as best he could to the music: he provided a Chosen Man as well as a Chosen Girl, and arranged for the final scene to take the form of a fertility orgy. His new story has a basis in anthropology, and one could not complain if he choreographed it to new music: but it was intolerable that he should apply it to existing music by the greatest ballet composer of our day—music in which every note is perfectly attuned to a different story.

If one ignores this fundamental error in planning, and looks at the ballet as part of Béjart's oeuvre, it stands out as far and away the best thing he has done. Though much of his choreography takes the form of rather dull gymnastics, at least these break away from his familiar clichés (neo-classical steps and modern dance exercises) which would be out of harmony with the theme; and there is one short passage in which the choreography shows evidence of research and is expressive. This happens at the end of Act I, when one of the young men takes up a pose very close to that of "The Sorcerer" in a famous prehistoric painting; this is followed immediately by a fine exit for all the men: they move off in a series of awkward hops, swinging their arms back and up over their heads in a way which really suggests a primitive rite. Unfortunately this episode represents only an insignificant fraction of the ballet as whole, which elsewhere lacks entirely the proper atmosphere of primitive mystery and magic. Tania Bari, the Chosen Girl, looks charming and seductive in her bathing suit and pony-tail coiffure; but she belongs on the beach at Cannes, not in a prehistoric rite. And any one single movement of the Massine version of

the final dance of the Chosen Virgin (as interpreted by Sokolova) is more expressive of the theme, period and mood of the ballet than the whole of the choreography allotted to this role by Béjart.

The décor and costumes, by Pierre Caille, have the dubious merit of being in harmony with the choreography. In Act I the stage is dominated by a large solid object with pipes extending from it, looking rather like a retort in a chemical works; in Act II, in contrast, the stage is decorated with a semicircle of low objects looking rather like stylised parking meters. The costumes could hardly be less appropriate for a prehistoric ritual: the men wear tights and nothing else, while the women wear bathing suits over tights.

Le Sacre du Printemps brought together the greatest number of dancers, but in length *Orphée* (danced by the Béjart company and the Ballet du TRM on the following evening) represented the most ambitious effort of the season: this ballet, in three acts and eight tableaux, lasted a complete evening. Here again we encountered bewildering incongruity between music and choreography and a staggeringly naïve attempt by Béjart at avant-gardism, employing gimmicks which were worn out decades ago. His whole approach to choreography is almost identical with that of Lifar: he seems to think of a ballet as a series of gimmicks stuck together, working to make some sort of theatrical effect at each moment but showing no feeling for continuity and little understanding of the use of movement for expressive purposes.

Béjart's choreography for *Orphée* shows extreme poverty of vocabulary and no homogeneity of style. From time to time the dancers perform one of a small number of classroom steps—nearly always a turn in *attitude*, a pirouette or a *grand jeté en avant*. At other times they perform some of the most hackneyed modern-dance exercises—contractions, impulses, etc.

Towards the beginning of the ballet Béjart gives promise of real inventiveness in some double-work for Orphée (Béjart himself) and His Shadow (Michèle Seigneuret): the two bodies combine together in one or two novel ways. But this promise proves to be wholly misleading—as so often happens with works by uninventive choreographers. (They tend to put all their ideas into the first few minutes, and then have little idea how to continue.)

The story by Béjart himself is as muddled and pretentious as the choreography: he seems to have used the Orpheus myth as a peg on which to hang a rag-bag of ideas. In the first tableau we find Orpheus "alone in his room, as if in his cage, alone with his shadow"; next we find him at a railway station, which is supposed to symbolise the World. Later he throws himself into "the rhythm of sensual passion" (pseudo-African dancing), stops besides a couple of lovers, meets Venus, the Ideal Woman—her ideality being symbolised by extreme lubricity—and finally, after losing Euridyce [*sic*] has a "Transfiguration" in which he is supposed to be "restored to life and his song is heard by the immense crowd" but in which the atmosphere is in fact bitter, jangling and confused.

The cast included some talented artists who did their best with the unrewarding material. Best of all was Marie-Claire Carrié, who made a convincingly erotic Venus, giving her movements a sultry,

TRM SADLER'S WELLS SEASON (Continued)

languorous quality and showing a strong personality, Michèle Seigneuret did all that was possible to put some reality into the empty role of His Shadow, and Tania Bari (Euridyce) struggled gamely through some very awkward lifts. Béjart himself danced the principal role in a rather wooden manner, making little of his favourite classical steps and even less of the modern-dance clichés.

The scenery by Rudolf Küfner is on the whole original and effective, consisting of a neutral abstract backcloth (curved like a cyclorama) against which are placed a series of semi-figurative three-dimensional objects suggesting the place of each scene. But the booths covered with newspapers are very dull; and the costumes (consisting mainly of overall tights for the girls and trousers for the boys) are uniformly meaningless.

By far the best thing about the ballet is its accompaniment, consisting mainly of *The Veil of Orpheus*, an outstanding musique concrète work by Pierre Henry—who with Pierre Schaeffer is one of the two great pioneers of this type of music. This “dramatic cantata”—Henry’s masterpiece—broke a good deal of new ground, and parts of it are available on the London record *Panorama of Musique Concrète*. But the impact of this work in the theatre—superbly reproduced at high volume—is far greater than in one’s one home; the pity of it is that—just as in his version of *Sacre*—Béjart prefers to ignore what the music is saying and to dream up his own episodes. Towards the end, for example, there is a liturgy in which the voice of Fate is heard speaking an ancient Greek text from an Orphic hymn. This voice is made to contradict itself, and there is a suggestion in the music of the immense revolt of Orpheus the martyr; but Béjart’s choreography for this scene (“Transfiguration” in the ballet) bears no observable relationship either to the musique concrète coming from the loud-speakers or to the ancient myth of Orpheus.

The third and fourth programmes were less interesting than the first two, though they had the advantage of including repeats of *Sacre*. Apart from Janine Charrat’s long pas-de-deux *Concerto de Grieg* and the Western Theatre Ballet’s *The Prisoners* (with choreography by Peter Darrell) Wednesday’s programme included Janine Charrat’s new ballet arranged for the TRM, *Fantaisie Concertante* (to Prokofiev’s *Third Piano Concerto*). This takes the familiar form of a semi-abstract ballet with sentimental interludes of mime inspired by the music but bearing no relationship to each other or to the dancing surrounding them. The second movement, devoted mainly to pole-vaulting, suffers from the fact that ballet-dancers on a stage cannot hope to compete with the soaring grace of specialist pole-vaulters on a sports ground.

The fourth programme opened on Friday with *Les Algues*, a ballet by Janine Charrat last seen here some years ago when she brought her own company to London. Though superficially this ballet belongs to the same category as those of Maurice Béjart, its impact is very different. On the one hand Janine Charrat is obviously desperately sincere: she is much less concerned with theatrically effective gimmicks than with presenting her theme. On the other hand she is staggeringly naïve: her approach to choreography is that of a clever and precocious child. The mad heroine Catherine (danced by Janine Charrat herself) stares out from behind clotted hair in very much the same way as Giselle, and reflects much the same antediluvian conception of the nature of madness. The hero Georges gives expression to his own growing madness by entrechats, pirouettes and tours en l’air. The erotomaniacs are so respectable as to be quite acceptable to Aunt Edna. The music by Guy Bernard is timid and totally lacking in style or expression, and much the same is true of the sound effects (which cannot compare in dramatic impact with true musique concrète). But there are two roles which stand out vividly. One is that of a coloured dancer (whom I take to be Ronnie Aul) putting together American modern dance movements skilfully and dancing with the most attractive and sinuous grace, like a large cat: the programme says “In conjunction with Ronnie Aul,” which suggests that he arranged his own part. The other rôle to stand out was interpreted by a remarkable artist in long black gloves: this short, dark slender girl moved with speed, fire and precision, projecting a vibrant personality which quite transcended the conventionality of her steps. (I think this must have been Dolores Lager.)

In place of *Symphonie pour un Homme Seul* (which could not be performed because Maurice Béjart had strained his ankle on Thursday) we saw *No Exit*, a new ballet arranged by Maurice Béjart for the Western Theatre Ballet. In spite of its defects this ballet for three people, based on the play *Huis Clos* by Sartre, should prove a useful addition to the Western Theatre Ballet’s repertoire because it introduces into it a contrasting choreographic style. There is little attempt to reproduce the complex emotional jungle of the Sartre play, with three people bound tightly together by patterns of love and hate, distrust and dependence, guilt and fear; and nothing in the choreography gives the suggestion of an eternity of claustrophobia so characteristic of the play. But if one forgets all about Sartre and considers the work simply as a ballet of three people getting on each

Continued at foot of page 10



Barbara Vernon and John Gregory whose new company, The Harlequin Ballet, gave its first London performance recently (reviewed below by Fernau Hall) Photographed by John Blomfield, London

HARLEQUIN BALLET

ON 30th April the Harlequin Ballet gave its first London performance at the Great Hall of Queen Mary College in Mile End Road. This company was formed by John Gregory and Barbara Vernon a year ago to take ballet to music clubs, arts societies, educational establishments and places not served by the general run of touring companies; also to give students the chance of working alongside experienced dancers, and to foster the Russian school of dancing. Queen Mary College comes under the heading “educational establishment,” but the Great Hall of this college is in fact a very large theatre—it was formerly the People’s Palace—and the young dancers of the company found themselves faced with the severe test of a stage of Covent Garden dimensions; in fact most of them seemed unable to cope with the problem of projection in such a theatre. An important exception was Elizabeth Raym, who danced a Czech Polka with vigour, precision of line and rhythm, and a confident stage presence. The company as a whole was seen to best advantage in the finale (arranged by Barbara Vernon) of a suite of Croatian Village dances, *Svatovac* (in which Barbara Vernon was herself the soloist).

Choreographically the most interesting item was *Harlequin and Columbine*, a suite from the Petipa ballet *Les Millions d’Arlequin* arranged by Tamara Karsavina. This is a period piece of historical interest, showing exactly the sort of ballet from which Fokine revolted so strongly—and yet which influenced him considerably, as one may judge from a comparison of *Harlequin and Columbine* and Fokine’s ballet *Carnaval*. The Petipa ballet reminded one that Karsavina has in her memories a whole archive of ballet history: if only someone would commission the Beneshes to transcribe this on to paper for the benefit of future generations!

The music was provided by the Queen Mary College Orchestra under its musical director Robert Tong, who is registrar of the college. Results were rather unsatisfactory when they had to cope with the Drigo music for *Harlequin and Columbine* (in a rather clumsy orchestration) but both the students and their conductor showed excellent qualities in a Purcellian musical interlude. The piano music was capably handled by Thomas Gilhooly.

FESTIVAL BALLET IN MEXICO CITY

Year after year,
when their Christmas season finishes at Festival Hall,
Festival Ballet leave London
to commence a long foreign tour.

Wherever they go they are given a tremendous reception,
but here in London we seldom hear from them
until they return.

This year I asked ANTON DOLIN to give me the
Company's news.

Because I feel it will interest their
many admirers, I publish the letter he wrote to me below.



I KNEW that I had come back to Mexico with a magnificent company. But I also knew that Mexico has seen, not once, but many times, the greatest of dancers and that everyone must put their best foot forward. They did, and their success, due to hard, too hard, work, deserved all the credit they got, which was plenty.

Witch Boy, as I always predicted it would be, was an enormous success. *Etudes* was a tour de force both on stage and off. The altitude made dancing, especially these two works, a tremendous strain on the dancers. How much oxygen Toni, Anita, John, André inhaled in the wings, then to make a hurried entrance once again, I don't know.

Everywhere I went they recalled the 1947 season of Ballet, when Markova and I with our own group had amalgamated with the Mexican Ballet under the direction then of Nellie Campobello and her sister Gloria. At that time I produced with an all Mexican corps *Giselle* and *Swan Lake* Act II. In the corps then was Lupe Serrano. Both Alicia and I danced in several of the Mexican Ballets and perhaps that season endeared us both to the hearts of the Mexican public more than anything else.

What a wonderful opening night, honoured by the presence of Madame La Presidente Lopes Mateos and Sir Andrew Noble, H. M. Britannic Ambassador, and Lady Noble. *Lac des Cygnes* Act II was our opening ballet with Marilyn Burr, and the corps de ballet dancing in top form and wonderful precision set the seal of success. The audience and critics loved *London Morning* for just what it set out to be, good, honest, clean entertainment. Then *Etudes* with Toni Lander, Gilpin, Prokovsky and Hogan. At the end Mexico was at the feet of London's Festival Ballet.

Toni and John brought me on the stage after *Etudes* and the wonder-

ful ovation of that public welcome I shall never forget.

Undoubtedly the four greatest successes were *Witch Boy*, *Etudes*, *Pas de Quatre* and *Variations for Four*. Marilyn Burr triumphed in *Don Quixote* and the *Esmeralda* Pas de Deux with André and John respectively. Believe me, for the former I had my misgivings. They had seen it danced by all the great couples and for the Mexican Toumanova and Serrano were the tops. It was good to read next day "first it was Toumanova, then Lupe Serrano, now Marilyn Burr."

We had a wonderful round of parties, formal and informal, and no one made our first visit to Mexico more pleasant than Maurice Cardiff, his wife and son. There was nothing he would not and did not do for the comfort of the whole company.

Well, that was our season in Mexico at the Teatro Bellas Artes, and we flew to Caracas; alas, seventeen hours late leaving Mexico airport owing to, first, engine trouble, and then an army plane landing badly, head on to the runway—the one we were using for our take-off. That was the only blot on our stay, knowing that I would have to postpone the opening night. Still we reached Caracas via Panama tired and exhausted, to face next day a new audience that in fifteen years had seen, ten years ago, the Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas and fifteen years ago Col. de Basil and his Ballet Russe.

It had been good to see and welcome again so many friends of those years 1941 and 1942 when with the American Ballet Theatre I had created *Bluebeard*, *Aleko*, *Don Domingo*, *Helen of Troy* with Markova and Baronova, produced *Princess Aurora*, *Giselle* and *Pas de Quatre* with a star-studded cast—Markova, Baronova, Kaye, Conrad, Lyon, Chase, Skibine, Eglevsky, Gibson, Laing and so many others.

ANTON DOLIN

TRM SADLER'S WELLS SEASON (Continued)

other's nerves, it has more merit than some of Béjart's far more ambitious ballets, and there is even a passage with a certain amount of expressiveness in the pas de deux of the two girls (when the Lesbian tries to win the interest of the other girl). Unfortunately the man remains a dummy, with no positive reactions; and the ballet cannot make any sustained effect because—as so often in Béjart ballets—the music has nothing to do with the theme, the action or the mood of the ballet.

One of the most interesting features of this short season was the fact that it aroused a great deal of public interest, and many performances were almost sold out. To some extent the season had the same appeal as that made by the Ballets des Champs Elysées when this company appeared at the Adelphi Theatre in 1946, with ballets by Roland Petit and Janine Charrat that offered a new flavour of verve and casual sexiness—in sharp contrast to the worthy but overfamiliar war-time offerings of English companies. But I think the main attraction of the TRM season was the production of *Le Sacre du Printemps*: in the twenties this was one of the most popular of the Diaghilev ballets, and it is hard to understand why the Royal Ballet has neglected it for so long. Surely the time is ripe for a revival of the Massine production at Covent Garden.

Another striking feature of this season was the large number of soloists who managed to give a hint of real talent from time to time, in spite of the limitations of the choreography. Apart from those mentioned above, there were Milenko Banovich and Pierre Dobrievich—two virile leaders in *Le Sacre du Printemps*—and a number of others. And André Vandernoot achieved very creditable results with Stravinsky's exacting *Sacre* score: it was not his fault that the music was muffled by the new (and disastrous) orchestra pit.

Men in Ballet Series still available:

John Field	..	..	..	March, 1956	..	..	1/3
Philip Chatfield	..	..	..	June, 1956	..	..	1/3
David Blair	..	..	..	July, 1956	..	..	1/3
Erik Bruhn	..	..	..	October, 1956	..	..	1/6
Flemming Flindt	..	..	..	March, 1957	..	..	1/6
Bryan Ashbridge	..	..	..	June, 1957	..	..	1/6
Louise Godfrey	..	..	..	July, 1957	..	..	1/6
Ronald Hynd	..	..	..	September, 1957	..	..	1/6
Keith Beckett	..	..	..	October, 1957	..	..	1/6
Bjorn Holmgren	..	..	..	November, 1957	..	..	1/6
Rainer Kochermann	..	..	..	December, 1957	..	..	1/6
John Gilpin	..	..	..	February, 1958	..	..	1/6
Oleg Briansky	..	..	..	March, 1958	..	..	1/6
Alexander Grant	..	..	..	May, 1958	..	..	1/6
Robert Helpmann	..	..	..	June, 1958	..	..	1/6
Jeffrey Kovel	..	..	..	July, 1958	..	..	1/6
Michael Hogan	..	..	..	September, 1958	..	..	1/6
Milorad Miskovitch	..	..	..	February, 1959	..	..	2/-
Norman Dixon	..	..	..	April, 1959	..	..	2/-
Michael Renault	..	..	..	May, 1959	..	..	2/-
Gary Burne	..	..	..	July, 1959	..	..	2/-



Drawing board design by Darrell Lass of Cinderella's kitchen for Granada's TV production of *Cinderella*.

TELEVISION

Granada Television—CINDERELLA with Margot Fonteyn and the Royal Ballet.

Wednesday, 13th April was a very important date for Granada Television: at a peak time that evening there began the transmission of this company's first large-scale production of ballet, Ashton's *Cinderella* with Margot Fonteyn and the Royal Ballet. It seems that Mr. Bernstein, head of Granada, has been keenly interested in ballet on television from the start, but he waited three years until he was sure the company was ready for such a major venture into new territory.

The main reason why Granada chose this ballet was its story: since this is very well known, they felt it would help viewers unaccustomed to ballet to appreciate three acts of dancing and mime. In fact they went to great trouble to make sure that the development of the story was crystal-clear, even making use of a commentary before each act. (This could have been embarrassing, but in fact it was well-written—by Paul Dehn—and introduced with admirable discretion.)

Clearly this production, which took over the services of the Royal Ballet for a week of rehearsal in London and four days in the studios in Manchester, as well as involving the making of a number of settings and many new costumes, must have cost a mint of money. Preparations were spread over a long time, and the planning of the publicity was nothing less than superb: the "Storyboard" providing the Press with details of the production (with hundreds of drawings of the shots) was in a class by itself. The director (Mark Stuart) was chosen for the job because he knew ballet from the inside—having been a dancer and stage director.

But television has its own laws, and it was not any of the large-scale spectacle (on which so much trouble had been taken) that made the most vivid impression: it was the simple shots of Margot Fonteyn dancing alone, with her body almost filling the frame, or acting in close-up. Ten seconds of this were worth more than an hour of spectacle—which was in general disappointing. Television is very unkind to scenes in which large numbers of people are milling about: because of the lack of colour and the third dimension, the image on the screen is liable to be both confused and dull. In the same way it was infuriating to see Margot Fonteyn dancing with the corps de ballet, for she appeared so small as to be unrecognizable, and in any case her movements became muddled up with those of the other dancers. Of course the director was severely hampered by the defects of Ashton's choreography, which does not give nearly enough expressive dancing to the title role.

One or two scenes, thought out afresh in television terms, came off very well—above all Cinderella's entrance to the ball. The camera craned in through the ballroom to a doorway at the top of a flight of

steps, looked through the doorway, and discovered Cinderella's coach arriving in the street. She came up the steps—being seen both from in front and from behind—and entered the ballroom. This was completely effective; and so was another entrance later in this act, when Cinderella came into frame on a rostrum in long shot behind the back of the Prince, seen in mid shot close to the camera. But a good many of the entrances went for very little because the important artist was not clearly picked out or too small.

The most disturbing feature of this production was the cutting. The "Storyboard" contained some intelligent remarks about the rhythm of cutting and its relationship to choreography, but said nothing about the shots themselves: in fact we saw a large number of cuts in which the apparent size and place of the artists changed only slightly, so that they seemed to jump (or ooze) across the screen when the cut (or mix) took place. This sort of fault used to be common in B.B.C. productions of ballet, but they have learned better.

It is very gratifying that Granada plans to stage ballet regularly, and clearly is prepared to spend a lot of money in this field. This competition cannot but give the most healthy stimulus to the art of television ballet. But it is regrettable that Granada has adopted a policy very similar to that of the B.B.C., i.e., making television versions of familiar large-scale ballets: Granada uses the Royal Ballet *in toto*, whereas the B.B.C. stages new productions with Royal Ballet stars, but this difference is, artistically speaking, a minor one. What we need is competition between completely different *kinds* of television ballet.

B.B.C. Television—Bali—The Fisherman and the Dancer—Easter Sunday.

This film, produced for the Italian Television Service by Giorgio Moser, is one of a series dealing with foreign lands. It was very carefully scripted and sympathetically directed to give a picture of life in Bali, with a variety of events clustered around the story of a Fisherman who makes a ritual abduction of a high-caste dancer so that they can get married. The producer managed to include shots of many of the most interesting Balinese dances, including classical Legong temple dancing, a Ketjak (monkey dance) and a "taxi-dance" in which a girl invited men to dance with her. The presentation of actual dances suffered from the fact that the director rarely showed the dancer as a whole—concentrating on head-and-arms or on feet—but there were marvellous shots of a great guru teaching Legong in the traditional way, moving behind the dancer and pushing her hands, head and feet into the right positions. The heroine at one point was incorrectly described as a Legong dancer: as a grown woman she could not possibly be a Legong dancer, for they must abandon Legong when they reach the age of puberty.

G. F.

PROGRAMMES FOR THE MONTH

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

17th May	Tues.	(eve)	<i>Baiser De La Fée, Les Rendezvous, Antigone</i>
18th	„	Wed.	(eve) <i>Le Lac Des Cygnes</i> (Grey, Ashbridge)
21st	„	Sat.	(mat) <i>Scènes de Ballet, La Fille Mal Gardée</i> (Nerina, Blair)
26th	„	Thurs.	(eve) <i>Baiser de la Fée, Les Rendezvous, Antigone</i>
28th	„	Sat.	(mat) <i>Scènes de Ballet, La Fille Mal Gardée</i> (Nerina, Blair)
28th	„	Sat.	(eve) <i>Scènes de Ballet, Giselle</i> (Grey, Ashbridge)
3rd June	Fri.	(eve)	<i>Les Rendezvous, Giselle</i> (Nerina, Blair)
4th	„	Sat.	(mat) <i>Le Lac Des Cygnes</i> (Page, Hynd)
4th	„	Sat.	(eve) <i>Scènes de Ballet, Giselle</i> (Fonteyn, Somes)
6th	„	Mon.	(eve) <i>Les Rendezvous, La Fille Mal Gardée</i> (Nerina, Blair)
10th	„	Fri.	(eve) <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Nerina, Blair)
11th	„	Sat.	(mat) <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Page, Hynd)
11th	„	Sat.	(eve) <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Beriosova, Macleary)
14th	„	Tues.	(eve) <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Linden, Doyle)
15th	„	Wed.	(eve) <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Nerina, Blair)
16th	„	Thurs.	(eve) <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Sibley, Burne)
18th	„	Sat.	(mat) <i>Scènes de Ballet, La Fille Mal Gardée</i> (Nerina, Blair)
21st	„	Tues.	(eve) <i>Le Lac Des Cygnes</i> (Nerina, Blair)
22nd	„	Wed.	(eve) <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Beriosova, Macleary)
25th	„	Sat.	(mat) <i>Le Lac Des Cygnes</i> (Sibley, Doyle)
25th	„	Sat.	(eve) <i>Scènes de Ballet, La Fille Mal Gardée</i> (Nerina, Blair)

END OF BALLET SEASON

TOURING SECTION OF THE ROYAL BALLET

W/c 16th May	<i>Gaiety Theatre, Dublin</i> (two weeks)
„ 30th „	<i>Grand Opera House, Belfast</i>
„ 6th June	<i>Opera House, Blackpool</i>
„ 13th „	<i>Alhambra, Bradford</i>

STARS OF THE BOLSHOI BALLET

At the Royal Albert Hall, London
27th June to 3rd July, 1960, at 7.30 p.m.
Mat. Sat. 2nd July, at 3 p.m.

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at Sadler's Wells Theatre, two weeks commencing 18th July

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Mrs. S. Forshaw, 3560, Yonge St. Apt. 209, Toronto 12, Canada.
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Ballet Rambert in **DARK ELEGIES** Photo: John Chesworth

CHOREOGRAPHERS OF TODAY

text by LEO KERSLEY

Antony Tudor

A PROPHET is not without honour save in his own country, says the old proverb, and although Antony Tudor's work receives a certain amount of lip-service from the English ballet public, it is certainly dishonourable that the majority of his works cannot be seen in England, and many have, in fact, never been seen here at all. This is all the more deplorable since ballets are not written down to any great extent and it is therefore impossible to appreciate Tudor from a score or printed script, as can be done with composers or playwrights.

Even if a miracle could happen, however, and Tudor's ballets were available on paper or in the regular repertoire, the name Tudor means far more to English ballet than the sum total of his choreographic works could convey. Few choreographers can ever—in our time at least—have exerted such a strong personal influence on all surrounding him and working with him. I would like to give a personal example

of this to illustrate what I mean. One day in October 1934 I went into the Mercury for my first class and the teacher was Antony Tudor whom I was familiar with by sight from his performances with the Vic-Wells Ballet. Tudor spent ten minutes chatting with me before going in to class—a typical Tudor gesture, for not only did it put me at my ease and make me feel at home; he in his turn had learned quite a lot about me before we began to work together. I saw him do the same thing with other beginners many times in the next few years, never employing the same conversational gambit twice, but always drawing the newcomer out and making him feel comfortable, and I may say without exaggeration that never during my years working in a mental hospital did I see a professional psychiatrist with a nimbler, surer touch.

This quick and unfailing interest in people was not, however, the

Antony Tudor

only reason which drew dancers to Tudor, and which aroused a devotion to his ideals and achievements which caused certain jealous rivals to dub him "the Jesus of British Grove" (his address at the time was British Grove, Hammersmith). Most ballet teachers say "Do this, like that" and that's it, with no explanation or logical reason given: not so Tudor, who often stopped at the barre and asked "Why do you think you do this exercise?" After taking several suggestions, he would then proceed to demonstrate the exercise's use; and it was not uncommon for the entire class from then on to be interspersed with steps which depend for their correct execution upon the diligent execution of that particular barre exercise. On other days, however, he would begin determined to give a general class in which the whole system was warmed up in the first half hour, and then the dancers in the next forty minutes would cover all the theoretically necessary points without digression. On these latter occasions nothing would sidetrack Tudor and such classes certainly demonstrated to him and to oneself exactly how much theory and practice one had really assimilated.

Tudor's insistence on his pupils' thinking terrified many at first, but once one saw how quickly and surely one improved—apart from the satisfaction gained from finding one was doing a job that was scientific, not haphazard—even the most tongue-tied novice would perk up and offer questions and answers.

It may therefore seem strange to say that far less was heard in Tudor's class than in the average, for once he had got his theme and explained it, during the rest of class one "felt it", and all that happened was that at the appropriate moments one would hear dancers muttering "Of course!" and "Simple—why didn't I think of it before?" or Tudor himself enquiring "Feel it?", in place of the exhibitions of hysteria often occurring in the classes of teachers who don't understand how an effect is achieved and so just scream and repeat a step until either it comes out right by accident, or they pass on to something else in exasperation.

Coming late to ballet, and not being ideally built for the job, Tudor was never a great classical dancer, but he was a great partner and consequently his pas de deux classes were "extra special", which is why, after four classes in one day, one could face a fifth from 5.30 to 7.0 in the evening!

Such a man was an inspiration (or should one say revelation) to the dance student, but Tudor's activities did not end there. Officially he was no longer Secretary of the Ballet Club when I joined in 1934, but he was still regularly referred to on such matters as "How much can we expect for an engagement in Norwich?" "Wal isn't on the phone, how do we get him in a hurry?" "How big is the Festival Theatre? How many lights? Scene bars?" "How much does Eve pay for her lessons?" "How long can we leave that bill from the printer's?" Tudor knew all the answers. He was still Stage Manager and Electrician and I was lucky to work as his assistant quite often until he left to form his own company in 1937; his use of light as part of the choreographic plan of his own ballets and others was second only to that of the Ballets Jooss, and his professionalism in this sphere was proved by the manner in which the entire stage staff during West End seasons not only obeyed him but praised him as well (no mean feat, as he was taking part in the stage performance at the same time).

Yet another field of activity was Tudor's lecture series at Morley College, the most remarkable feature of which was the manner in which he knew and could present the historical aspect of any problem with clarity and interest. Perhaps his tour de force was achieved when

he spent a whole fascinating evening pointing out the different manner—physical, dramatic and musical—in which two dancers (Peggy van Praagh and Celia Franca) should attack the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, and the solo of the Woman in His Past in *Jardin aux Lilas*.

This glimpse of Tudor might make the reader wish to meet him: but a far better method of seeing his many sides would be to watch his ballets, because what Tudor thinks is inevitably expressed eventually in ballet terms. To give an example, while rehearsing for *Les Sylphides* in 1934 Tudor decided that the ballet was unique in being the first and only true ballet of a mood. In 1937, he presented the next one: *Dark Elegies*. Being the most difficult kind of ballet to present, it is no wonder that these two ballets remain the only examples of what may one day become ballet's particular province in the world of art: the presentation of a mood—for while in other forms a mood can be created with infinite pains, these two works prove that one can not only create a mood, but also demonstrate its many shades and nuances in one ballet.

Tudor the teacher created *Gala Performance*, which was a most entertaining way of demonstrating the essential differences in the three great teaching methods of ballet training—that is, before it turned into the slapstick romp it has become nowadays. Tudor the observant analyst created *Jardin aux Lilas*, *Pillar of Fire* and *Gallant Assembly*, showing in the first two how years of inhibition and convention can result either in still greater control, or a volcanic eruption of action; and in the latter how animal men could be under the veneer of fine manners and expensive clothes of the French court. Tudor the reader could be observed in his very deft translations into ballet of *The Descent of Hebe*, *Lysistrata*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cross Gartered* ("Twelfth Night"). The kindly cynic could be seen in *Adam and Eve* and *The Judgment of Paris*, while in *Undertow* he attempted to show that a murderer is not born, but made by a series of unfortunate circumstances. *The Planets* was a magnificent piece of theatre, showing just how much and how varied an atmosphere could be created in the tiny Mercury Theatre.

All these works combine to show an extraordinary man, and many of his major ballets have never even been seen in England at all: it is a shame that this very English genius should not be in a position to create quietly and comfortably in England; he works slowly, for his ballets are always complicated and he has a superfluity of ideas to pare away before even beginning to rehearse (it is nothing for him to arrange six versions of one small section and rearrange for days until he is quite sure which one really fits the circumstances). I have often wondered how different the history of English ballet would have been if Tudor had accepted Ninette de Valois' invitation to reproduce *Jardin aux Lilas* for the Vic-Wells Ballet in 1937; and even more often fumed at the fate which caused the cancellation of a season in 1935 when Tudor was to have presented the first three-act English ballet, and that prevented him from getting support to present Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* in "the round" in 1938: for now we see quite well that ballet can be most effective "in the round" and that the four-hundred page Kalavala Saga would not have been one of those twenty-minute ideas we so often see stretched out unbearably to three acts today. And when I see some of the so-called opera "productions" on television today and think what Tudor did with the second act of *Tristan* over twenty years ago, I say still more strongly bring him back and give him the chance to work in England, for he is not just a creator of beautiful movement or a balletic confectioner, but that rarity, a thinker who expresses himself in movement.

Already published in this series

Jack Carter	..	..	..	April, 1960
Frederick Ashton	..	..	..	May, 1960

to be published in forthcoming issues

Kenneth Macmillan
Maurice Béjart



ANTONY TUDOR

Photo: Annemarie Heinrich

Filming

Paris

MOIRA SHEARER IN LES BALLETS DE PARIS

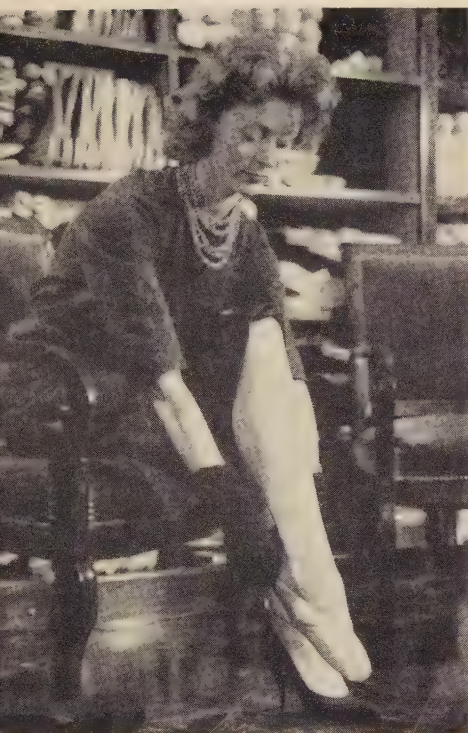


Photo at left: Trying on her dancing shoes in a Paris shop. She is to star with Roland Petit, Zizi Jeanmarie and Cyd Charisse (who came from Hollywood) in the film to be produced by Terence Young entitled *Les Ballets de Paris*.

Photo at right: (l. to r.) Jerome Robbins, Gina Trikonis, Suzie Kaye, Nanette Rosen and Robert Wise during a take on the streets of New York. The film, a United Artists release, is based on the stage play with music by Leonard Bernstein. Appropriately, the action took place on West End Avenue at 67th Street.

Photo below:

RECEPTION given for the principal dancers and directors of the Nervi Festival to be held from 7th to 28th July this year.

(l. to r.) Ivan Dragadze, Yvonne Meyer, Ethery Pagava (from Miskovitch's group), Miskovitch, President Borelli (organiser), Gerard Ohn, Leonide Massine Jr., Tania Massine Jr., Vassili Sulich and Nicole Nogaret (from Miskovitch's group). (Behind, left): painters Jean Denis Malcles and Alfred Manessier. *Photo:* Serge Lido



BACK

New

JEROME ROBBINS I





Perry Como, said to be the world's highest paid TV star, stops beside a fruit barrow in London's Covent Garden, watched by ballerina Margot Fonteyn, during filming near the Royal Opera House, for TV.

MEMBERS of the Western Theatre Ballet Company being instructed in the art of casting whilst touring the Barlaston factory of Josiah Wedgwood & Sons, during their appearance at the Theatre Royal, Hanley, prior to their London season at Sadler's Wells (reviewed in this issue).





A scene from the 1958/9 production of Bartok's *Wooden Prince* in Budapest

BALLET AROUND THE WORLD:

HUNGARY

HUNGARIAN classical ballet grew up in the mid-nineteenth century, but its formation was mainly in the hands of foreign masters and the artists also consisted mainly of Viennese or Italian dancers.

A turning point came in the years 1899 and 1901 when the Russian Ballet from St. Petersburg came to Budapest on a guest visit. Public opinion and the contemporary critics could not escape from its stirring influence.

It showed how backward was the technical ability of the Opera House's Ballet company and how shallow was the artistic value of the choreography.

New ballet masters set about bringing them up to date. Miklós Guerra threw himself into this work with great determination and largely through his efforts great improvements were achieved. He educated such eminent dancers as Emilia Nirschy, Tessza Sebessy and Anna Pally, and the first classically trained Hungarian dancer Ferenc Nádasi, who carried on Guerra's educational inheritance for many years.

Disliked by the management of the Opera House because of his strict principles, Guerra went abroad during the first world war, but his influence was to be seen later in the educational and choreographic work of Ferenc Nádasi and Gyula Harangozó.

The *Wooden Prince* was performed at the Opera House in 1917. Béla Bartók's music is national, folk and European all at once and clearly pointed out the right path for the new Hungarian ballet, but in those days the brilliant music was accompanied by weak choreography.

The ballet master crisis continued after the first world war and anti-ballet callisthenics tendencies attacked the classical art of dancing more and more vigorously. The management of the Opera House tried various ballet masters and invited guest choreographers, but had no real success.

The year 1936 was an important one in the history of Hungarian ballet. It was then that Ferenc Nádasi and Gyula Harangozó came to the front in the opera ballet.

Ferenc Nádasi, returning to Budapest after many years touring Europe, began training the Opera House dancers. Gyula Harangozó, who first attracted attention in 1928 as a brilliant solo dancer, undertook the choreography. His first work, the *Tavern Scene* (from the work of Jenő Hubai "Tavern Scenes," arranged and orchestrated by Jenő Kenessey) was received with great enthusiasm by public and critics alike.

Breaking with empty showiness and cold conventionalism, Gyula Harangozó began the portrayal of folk life. Using Hungarian folk dances, he turned the mime parts into dance and used them in the development of the action.

Up to 1941 a series of ballets showed the fertility of his creative fantasy. Of these, the most outstanding are the stimulating Polovtsian dances with their wild mood, the *Salade* (Darius Milhaud) radiating French light-heartedness and humour, the *Pitcher* (Casella), full of life, and the dramatic *Romeo and Juliet* built on beautiful classical steps.

The *Miraculous Mandarin*—revived in a more realistic conception—and also his arrangement of the choreography of the *Wooden Prince*—which at the time was officially banned—show his links with Béla Bartók. But Harangozó's new views were not to the liking of the directorship of the Opera House and, tiring of the intrigues, he resigned his position as ballet-master in 1942.

For a few years the Opera House once more experimented with guest choreographers. This was even more of a pity because by now there were excellent soloists, such as Károly Szalay, Ilona Véra, Bella Bordy, Melinda Ottrubay, Gyula Harangozó, Ferenc Közsegi, László Csányi, Zoltán Sallay, and a younger generation trained entirely by Ferenc Nádasi.

Liberation from German occupation in 1945 brought new possibilities for ballet, including a great increase in the numbers of the ballet loving public.

The *Miraculous Mandarin*, staged in 1945, showed once again the road which Hungarian choreographic art had to travel. Although this production was arranged by Gyula Harangozó, it was not until three years later that he was nominated leading choreographer. The



A scene from Jenő Kenessey's 4-act ballet *Song of Bihari* included in the current repertory of the Erkel Theatre with revised choreography by Viktor Fülöp. Principal dancers seen here are Gabriella Lakatos and Ferenc Havas.

BY GYÖRGY CSIZMADIA

1948 production, *Open Air Concert*, depicting the life of the Prater of Vienna (J. Strauss) and the *Madcap Students* (Ferenc Farkas) staged in 1949, again showed his capabilities as a choreographer.

During these years Budapest audiences had the opportunity of sampling the art of Soviet ballet and as a result Soviet ballet artists were invited as guest trainers to the Opera House, in response to popular demand, to teach the Hungarian company full-length ballet works. The first Soviet ballet, the *Nutcracker Suite*, was put on by the Budapest company in 1950. This was followed a few months later by the revolutionary *Flames of Paris*. The training and choreography for both was done by V. Voinonnen.

The Ballet company had by now reached a high technical standard and in addition to the older soloists now included younger performers such as Dóra Csinády, Gabriella Lakatos, Vera Pásztor, Viktor Fülöp, Ernő Vashegyi and János Ősi.

Later two more Russian ballets were staged—the beautiful *Swan Lake*, under the tuition of Messerer, and the Soviet ballet-drama *The Fountain of Bahkchisarai*, taught by R. Zacharov.

The first full-length Hungarian ballet was performed in 1951. It was the *Kerchief*, with music by Jenő Kenessey and choreography by Gyula Harangozó. Due to its folk theme, the rich use of Hungarian dances, and the successful combination of folk and classical steps, it was a great success both at home and abroad.

Coppelia in three acts, another of Gyula Harangozó's productions, was performed in 1953. In this work Harangozó brings out the taciturn and grotesque character of Dr. Coppélius.

In recent years a young choreographer, Ernő Vashegyi, has come to the fore. Apart from reviving *Petrouchka*, the *Wooden Prince* and the *Valpurgis Night* scene from *Faust*, he has successfully worked out problems such as the choreography for Kenessey's four-act ballet, *The Song of Bihari*.

The most outstanding feature of his creative personality has been the seeking of lyricism, and of dramatic and modern classical forms. In the Kenessey ballet he makes rich use of national dance elements.

Outstanding revival of the 1956 season was the *Miraculous Mandarin*, this time with the modernistic settings originally envisaged by Bartók; the revival, with choreography and arrangements by Gyula Harangozó, is in faithful keeping with Bartók's conception.

When it was decided to present *Giselle* in the 1957–58 season, the Opera House management invited Lavrovsky of Leningrad to undertake the choreography. Without sensationalism, and without radically altering the traditional movement of the ballet, his work enriched it and made it the outstanding item in the season's repertory.

A young dancer, Zsuzsa Kun, proved herself a worthy successor to such magnificent Giselles as Taglioni, Grisi and Fanny Elssler.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the State Opera House last year was celebrated with a gala performance of Bartók's two ballets, *Wooden Prince* and *The Miraculous Mandarin*.

During the 75 years, the *Nutcracker Suite* has been performed 273 times and *Swan Lake* 101 times.

An eagerly awaited première, due in May this year at the Opera House, is *Ludys Matyi* (Mattie the Gooseboy) with choreography by Gyula Harangozó, from the concert suite written in 1950 by Ferenc Szabó.

At present the 130-strong company plays at both the State Opera House and the Erkel Theatre in Budapest—and always before full houses. Combined seating capacity of the two theatres is 3,400, and performances are given every night, including Sundays, and on Sunday mornings and the mornings of national holidays, throughout the season.

New dancers for the company are trained at the Ballet Institute, founded in 1950, where a nine-year course is given in technical and supplementary subjects, including fencing. From their second year at the school, students perform regularly at the Opera House or the Erkel Theatre.

Ballet training goes on, too, at 50 places in the provinces and last year 10,000 children were attending these courses in Hungary.

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Gabriella Lakatos and János Ősi in the Budapest Opera House production of *Swan Lake*



Gyula Harangozó, now one of Hungary's leading choreographers, seen here as Dr. Coppélius in a production of *Coppelia* several years ago in Budapest

Hungarian ballerina Vera Pásztor



Ferenc Havas in the ballet *The Kerchief*, first full length Hungarian ballet with music by Jenő Kenessey and choreography by Gyula Harangozó

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KENNETH MACMILLAN

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News from Paris

reported by Ferdinand Reyna

THÉÂTRE DES NATIONS SEASON

THE Théâtre des Nations began its season on 22nd March at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt. Under the title *Cycle de la Communauté* (Cycle of the Community) two companies of coloured dancers were presented: the National Ensemble of the Ivory Coast and the National Ensemble of Mali (Senegal and French Sudan).

The first show was hardly to be described as theatre, though it was certainly authentic. What happened was that family and religious rituals were taken out of their natural surroundings and transferred to the stage: one saw games and customs such as might be found in any village of the Ivory Coast. Apart from the dance items, the show included a little comedy written for the theatre by M. G. Coffi-Gadeau. This takes place in front of a bamboo hut, where the whole village mixes together its cries, its games, its rituals and the legal battle of a mother-in-law with her daughter-in-law. The latter is sent away from the village and replaced by a *yaounda* woman (i.e. one who is capable of giving birth to twins). The story is accompanied by dances performed by men whose faces and chests are marked with white paint, and whose whirling raffia loincloths make them look like marionettes as they turn to the syncopated rhythms beaten out by the bells fastened around their ankles and wrists.

Also worthy of note are the dangerous evolutions of a group of stilt dancers: mounted on their bamboo pedestals, these men dance with their heads in the flies. In violent contrast are the mask dances performed at stage level and the *kotou* dances with big leaps. The multi-coloured make-up and the white streaks which cross the faces and the chests of the dancers are intended to frighten the enemy. Around their waists the dancers wear a kind of tutu of coarse straw.

On the whole the show is interesting, and has been well received because of its authenticity.

The Mali ensemble is much more theatrical; this is not surprising, for M. André Voisin (who headed the groups of artists from the People's Theatre of Morocco and gave courses in dramatic art at the Marigny Theatre) had a share in the presentation of the Mali show. Together with M. Sonar Senghor, director of the Mali company, M. Voisin was the producer of the *Rose Rouge*, the famous cabaret in St.-Germain-des-Près.

As was to be expected, we see a very carefully studied presentation. The tom-tom players stand out from grey curtains, in atmospheric lighting, and the dancers perform in a disciplined way. Certain scenes give a reasonably clear impression of primitive festivals, in spite of their adaptation to the stage. The scene showing a sick person cured by the magic of rhythm reaches a pitch of violence which is not without its own beauty. Very striking is the turning of the straw ricks under the spot-

lights. These black artists show themselves capable of sadness, sweetness and humour. Sometimes their dances become frenzied: this is true of the *peulh* danseuses as well as of the *casamançais*, the *oulofs* and the *bobos*. The gamut of colours in the materials with which the players of Kora and the hunters of Ferecoraba drape themselves is really sensational. Greens, orange, different shades of blue, pistachio, grey, and scarlet prove the national gift for bringing together colours which give the costumes of the artists a magic as real as that of their dances.

OPÉRA COMIQUE

At present the Opera is said to be preparing new ballets, but nothing new is being presented to the public. At the Opéra Comique there is a revival of *L'Emprise*, a ballet in one scene with book by Pierre Rhallys, music by G. Delerue and choreography by Dick Sanders. A war is in progress. A man chased by a patrol seeks refuge in a bombed house where he hides himself under some old blankets. The patrol goes away; he gets up, wanders about, and suddenly finds himself face to face with a mad girl with torn clothes who believes him to be the man she loves. She takes him in her arms; then, recovering her reason, she realises her mistake, takes fright, and shrieks with fear. The man strangles her to save his life and rushes out into the night towards his fate. *L'Emprise* was danced by Claire Sombert and Youli Algaroff. The music did much for the success of the ballet: M. George Delerue, a composer of the younger generation, was able to deal without undue emphasis with a subject which could easily have fallen into melodrama. His orchestration maintains a sense of proportion throughout the work, as well as a restrained lyricism which reinforces the tragic effect intended by the writer of the scenario. We saw this ballet three years ago at the Enghien Festival: transferred to the stage of the Opéra Comique, it has lost nothing of its strange and morbid atmosphere.

CHARRAT

Janine Charrat is at present working on the choreography of a work based on the Sophocles tragedy *Electra*: this will be presented in the form of a tragedy-ballet. It will be accompanied by electronic music composed by Henry Pousseur, as well as by lines spoken by actors. *Electra* will be performed by Janine Charrat, and Orestes by Milenko Banovitch. This ballet will have its première at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels.

TCHERINA

When the Paris season starts again in October Ludmila Tcherina will present a ballet based on Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman*. Three designers will work on the three episodes: Carzou, Clavé and Bombois.

BALLETS MODERNES DE PARIS

The Compagnie des Ballets Modernes de Paris, directed by Françoise and Dominique, will soon have a three-week season at the Théâtre de l'Etoile during which two different programmes will be presented. These will include new ballets and also *Epithalame*, the ballet by the English choreographer Deryck Mendel which won the first prize for choreography at the Dance Festival at Aix-les-Bains. Deryck Mendel will also choreograph the first ballet written by Ionesco.

AT the newly reconstructed Palais des Sports (an immense auditorium which can hold more than six thousand) the "Choruses and Dances of the Soviet Army", directed by Colonel Boris Alexandrov, had an unprecedented success. Their first performance in France goes back to 1937, at the time of the Great Exhibition. The Parisian public was roused to great enthusiasm by their wide vocal repertoire, the discipline of the singers and dancers, and the acrobatic feats of the dancers (whose exploits as they vied with each other were breathtaking). Though Colonel Alexandrov's men remained for a whole month at the Palais des Sports, all seats were booked up a fortnight in advance.

The Bayanihan Philippine company also had great success as part of the Théâtre des Nations season. This company gave five performances for the Théâtre des Nations and immediately followed this with a season at the Théâtre de l'Alhambra. This show had a success in Paris far exceeding anything its organisers had hoped for: both critics and the public took this company to their hearts.

On 1st April, during a ballet evening at the Opéra Comique, the first performance was given of a ballet in two scenes by Peter van Dijk, premier danseur étoile of the Opéra. This ballet is based on the famous story by Balzac, *Peau de Chagrin* (Shagreen Skin). A young man, longing for everything in life, obtains a shagreen skin from a magician. This marvellous skin will permit him to have everything he wants; but each time he makes a wish, the skin becomes smaller—like his life. Maddened with new desires, the young man abandons the love of Pauline for that of Théodora, a femme fatale. But this brings about the young man's death, and in his last moments it is only the love of Pauline which consoles him. The part of the young man was taken by the choreographer himself; that of Pauline by Jacqueline Rayet, première danseuse at the Opera; and that of Théodora by Ninon Lebertre, première danseuse at the Opéra Comique. All three were excellent in their roles, but there was too much padding in van Dijk's choreography, and the miming was better than the rather weak dancing. The music of Yvan Semenov showed a certain heaviness. The décor and costumes of the designer Jean Pierre Ponnelle had the fantasy required by the story.



THE ROYAL BALLET

IN JOHANNESBURG

*SECOND HALF OF THE SEASON



reported
by
Mary
Kenwood

Photo at top of page:

The scene on stage after the performance on the last night of the Royal Ballet's Johannesburg season. Mr. A. H. Stodel of African Theatres is in the foreground. From left to right: Bryan Ashbridge, John Field, Beryl Grey, John Lanchbery conductor, Antoinette Sibley, Brian Shaw.

*The first half of the season was reviewed in our April issue.

ON Friday, 4th March, Nadia Nerina and Gary Burne appeared in their first *Swan Lake* of this season. A packed and enthusiastic audience gave the South African ballerina a tumultuous reception.

Nerina's crispness of style seemed to me better suited to the third act of the ballet than either the second or fourth. Her brilliant technique shone and glittered in this act, and I especially liked her touch of a few winged arm movements at the moment she tries to hide the vision of Odette at the ballroom window from the Prince, as though to reassure him or remind him that she really is the Swan Princess.

Gary Burne was a perfect foil for Nerina. His partnering was of an especially high standard, as was his performance of the third act variations.

IN the second half of their season, the Royal Ballet gave thirteen performances of *Sleeping Beauty*. These were shared among five ballerinas. This company must surely be the richest in the world in star material and potential. Can there be another capable of producing five Auroras and four Florimunds each fully worthy of the honour of dancing this coveted role, and all within a period of a few weeks? I cannot imagine it.

Sleeping Beauty has many rewarding minor roles, and Margaret Knoesen gave a refreshingly different performance as the first female interpreter I have seen in the role of Carabosse. Mention should be made too of Barbara Remington's Lilac Fairy. This dancer has all the qualities necessary for this difficult and important role.

As for the different Blue Birds, these have all been magnificent. Top of the list are Antoinette Sibley and Brian Shaw who have invariably stopped the show. Audrey Farriss and Graham Usher (a well-matched couple) brought lustre to these as to all their roles. A technically brilliant performance was also given by Susan Alexander, who performed at the matinée on the 12th March in place of Audrey Farriss who was indisposed.

But, quite naturally, it has been the five ballerinas—outstanding every one—who have been the talk of Johannesburg. And certainly between them they have qualities to please all tastes.

First came the classical beauty and austere purity of line of Beriosova with her remote, goddess-like air and flawless technique. Then peerless Grey, whose lovely flowing movements and shining artistry illumine every role she dances. Nerina has her own special gifts of superb attack, technique and speed which enable her to dance outstandingly many of the lighter ballerina roles, though to me she is limited in those which require more depth and emotion. Susan Alexander also has lightness, serenity and exceptional technical ease—surprising in so young an artist.

But it has been the discovery of Sibley which has given us the biggest thrill, for here surely is a young girl with all the potentialities of real greatness. She has exquisite carriage and arms, and here again it is her own inner radiance and artistry which transform everything she does. Her Rose Adagio was among the finest I have ever seen, and left me breathless at the interminable seconds during which, at its conclusion, she remained poised on one point. We here shall watch her progress with the keenest interest.

As mentioned earlier, one of the strongest overall impressions I have gained is of the enormous increase in strength of the male dancers of the Company. One by one we have seen Donald Macleary, Bryan Ash-

bridge, Gary Burne and Desmond Doyle—all in the great tradition. In addition the male soloists and even the male corps are full of promise. Brian Shaw has been a revelation to Johannesburg audiences—and he makes each performance an experience, whilst Graham Usher, Donald Britton and Alexander Bennett have all given first class performances. A young dancer who is also well worth watching is Robert Mead.

Among the girls who have contributed performances which have added immensely to our pleasure have been Audrey Farriss, Brenda Taylor, Pamela Moncur, Joan Blakeney, Elaine Thomas, Elizabeth Anderson and Dorothea Zaymes. The corps too has been a constant delight, and its discipline has been particularly noticeable in such dances as the dance of the four cygnets in *Swan Lake* and those of Aurora's friends in the Second Act of *Sleeping Beauty*.

I feel we here in South Africa owe a debt of gratitude both to the Administrators of the Royal Opera House for sending us so many of their greatest stars and not fobbing us off with the less great, and also to African Theatres for bringing us this wonderful company of artists as the highlight of our Festival Year.

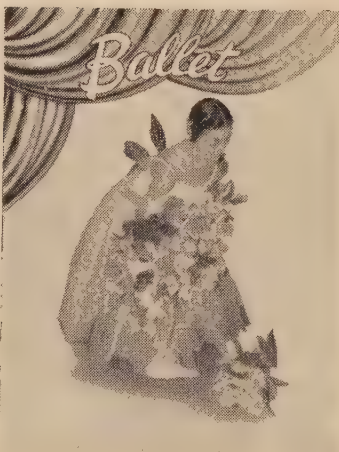
The closing night of the Johannesburg season was one of the most exciting I have ever known. At the end of the superlative performance (*Sleeping Beauty*) streamers were thrown and balloons let down on the audience. Mr. A. H. Stodel, head of African Theatres, after thanking Beryl Grey for an "unforgettable performance" (thunderous applause) also thanked the Administrators of the Royal Opera House, and the company "one and all." He said that the 52 performances had comprised the most memorable ballet season ever held in South Africa, and that though the Empire Theatre had had many fine representations nothing that had gone before could compare with this. This was greeted once again with thunderous applause. John Field, replying on behalf of the Company, thanked Johannesburg for its support and enthusiasm and praised African Theatres for its courage in making the decision to bring out the Royal Ballet. He said he hoped that they would be able to come again in the not-too-distant future (applause) and after mentioning the contribution South Africans had made to the ballet, said that perhaps one day when the Royal Ballet was again playing on these boards, a South African company would be seen at the Royal Opera House in London. The evening culminated in cast and audience joining in the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

It is only left to us here in Johannesburg to echo Mr. Stodel's sentiments and to say once again "Thank you, Royal Ballet, each and every one, for a truly memorable season."

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SOVIET NEWS

From Nina Karasyova Ballet Today Correspondent in Moscow



THE première of a new ballet *The Humpbacked Horse* by the Soviet composer Rodion Shchedrin, and produced by ballet-master A. Radunsky, was staged at the Bolshoi Theatre.

The Turkmenian Theatre of Opera and Ballet in the city of Ashkhabad presented the première of a new ballet by M. Ravich and N. Mukhtarov, under the direction of ballet-master K. Japarov.

The USSR Folk Dance Ensemble, directed by I. Moiseyev, appeared at the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall, Moscow, in a new programme which was enthusiastically received.

Moscow audiences also had an opportunity to enjoy concerts given by the Urals Chorus and Dance Ensemble, directed by Knyazeva, and the Pyatnitsky Chorus and its dance ensemble, which is directed by T. Ustinova.

The Beryozka State Choreographic Ensemble, directed by N. Nadezhdina, enjoyed a successful tour in Leningrad and Tallin.

The city of Riga played host to artists of the Bolshoi Theatre, O. Lepeshinskaya, R. Struchkova, A. Lapauri, S. Zvyagina, Leonid Zhdanov, E. Kashani, K. Rikhter, N. Fyodorova, and others. They performed ballet fragments and choreographic miniatures. The Bolshoi Theatre artists also performed for workers of industrial enterprises and collective farms of Latvia.

In 1959 ballet-master L. Yakobson staged a ballet performance called "Choreographic Miniatures" at the Kirov Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Leningrad. The finest ballet artists and new young dancers took part in it.

The Leningrad artists recently presented these choreographic miniatures in Moscow. Of particular interest were: *Mother* to A. Skryabin's music "Tragic Poem", performed by Honoured Artist of the RSFSR L. Voishnis; *Punchinello* to music by S. Rakhmaninov (performed by K. Rassadin); *The Toady* to music by V. Tsitovich (performed by K. Rassadin); *The Troika*, music by I. Stravinsky; a fragment from the ballet *Sacred Spring* (performed by K. Zlatkovskaya, I. Gensler, I. Utretskaya, and A. Gridin); *The Blind Woman* to music by M. Ponce (performed by People's Artist of the RSFSR A. Shelest and I. Chernyshev); *Viennese Waltz*, music by R. Strauss (performed by People's Artists of the USSR N. Dudinskaya and K. Sergeyev), and a fragment from A. Khachaturyan's ballet *Spartacus* (performed by People's Artists of the Republic I. Zubkovskaya and A. Makarov).

The Riga Theatre of Opera and Ballet appeared in the Kremlin Theatre of Moscow with a ballet, *Staburadze*, by A. Kalnyn. The ballet is based on a legend about the sorrowful fate of two sweethearts, a girl Szhaidrite, and a youth Kryistap. It was produced by ballet-master E. Changa. Dancers I. Ginter, V. Shvetsova, Y. Grauds and A. Ozolyn performed the main roles.

Another ballet, *Rigonda*, staged by the Riga actors evoked the greatest interest. The libretto, written by a young Latvian composer, R. Grinblat, is based on the novel, "Lost Motherland" by the well-known Latvian writer V. Lacis. It was produced by ballet-master Elena Tangiyeva-Birzniek, and artist E. Vardaunis. The main roles were performed by G. Ritenberg (Ako), Velta

Viltzin (Nelima), V. Tsukanov (Sam), A. Lemberg (Planter), and A. Bauman (Konchitta).

During their tour in Moscow the Latvian artists also gave a concert. Of particular interest were the Latvian national dances, performed by A. Bauman, and a bolero to music by M. Ravel and staged by People's Artist of the Latvian SSR Elena Tangiyeva-Birzniek (a pupil of A. Vaganova). The solo parts were excellently performed by Y. Pankrat A. Lemberg and A. Spura.

* * *

The Leningrad Little Opera Theatre is preparing to stage a ballet by Swartz, *On the Eve*, based on I. Turgenev's novel of the same title.

* * *

The Bolshoi Theatre will stage a ballet, *Song of the Forest*, by G. Zhukovsky (ballet masters O. Tarasova and A. Lapauri) and another entitled *Muscovites*, written by a young Soviet composer, Y. Yefremov, and produced by ballet-master R. Zakharov.

A Book about the English Ballet

A book entitled "The English Ballet", by N. Roslavleva, in which the author gives an objective exposition of the history of the development of the English ballet, has appeared in the Soviet Union. This book, which acquaints the Soviet ballet lover with English choreography, is richly illustrated and contains a list of the repertoire up to 1958 inclusive. The book was sold out within several hours after it appeared in the bookstores.

Jack Anderson from San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO BALLET

TWO premières have been presented during the San Francisco Ballet's successful spring season. The first was Lew Christensen's *Danza Brillante*. Not the brittle coruscating work its name might suggest, it is a Romantic abstraction to the Mendelssohn *Octet* which, at its best, achieves a quicksilver effervescence. Strangely enough, Christensen has omitted the octet's most famous movement, the scherzo, which makes the ballet seem incomplete. Although the second movement is rather unimaginative, the opening movements contain kaleidoscopic choreographic patterns which are very refreshing.

This cannot be said of the second new ballet, Christensen's arrangement of the *Esmeralda* pas de deux, a piece as trashy as its garish costumes.

Christensen is not usually associated with dramatic ballets. Yet two of his works in this form proved to be among the most interesting ballets in the repertoire.

Most impressive was *The Lady of Shalott* (Sir Arthur Bliss), based on Tennyson's poem. Through her magic looking glass, the Lady beholds a panorama of mediæval life, but remains aloof from it until, tempted by Sir Lancelot, she leaves her isolation and

innocence to enter the real world and, inevitably, its tragedy. That a ballet in which the protagonist must express herself largely through mime and must avoid direct contact with most of the other members of the cast is so successful is a tribute to Christensen's skill and to Jocelyn Vollmar's fine performance as the Lady.

The other dramatic ballet was *Jinx* (Britten), a macabre study in circus superstition concerning a Petrouchka-like juggler whose fellow performers accuse him of bringing bad luck to their troupe. There are some choreographic dead spots, but the ballet concludes with a proper grotesque atmosphere.

BAY AREA BALLET

The Bay Area Ballet, currently dancing as opera-ballet for the Cosmopolitan Opera Company, found time to première a new work at a concert shared with the California Youth Symphony. The Ballet, *The Emperor's Nightingale* (Michel Panaieff-Herbert Donaldson) was the product of an exchange programme set up between the local company and the Los Angeles City Ballet.

Despite the Hans Christian Andersen libretto, the choreography by a respected ballet master, the commissioned score, and

the good dancers in the solo roles, the ballet was thoroughly mediocre, a blending of classic clichés and pseudo-Oriental posturings, with none of the magic of a fairy tale.

The Bay Area Ballet's whole season has been open to criticism. Although the opera performances give experience to the dancers, they are taking place at the cost of neglecting the regular repertoire and preventing the realization of the company's aims to produce new ballets and serve as a choreographers' workshop.

ROBERT JOFFREY

The success of the little Robert Joffrey ballet ensemble, which recently visited here, has been so great that Joffrey has been able to form a second and larger company, the American Ballet Center Company. Its single San Francisco programme contained Francisco Moncion's *Pastorale* and Joffrey's *Pas des Déeses* from the old company's repertoire, plus Balanchine's *Raymonda* pas de dix and a charming version of *La Fille mal Gardée* by Fernand Nault, the American Ballet Theatre's ballet master. The first-rate standards of production and performance made this programme one of the season's most attractive events.

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RECORD GUIDE

SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS

Perfection in this world is unattainable and so, I suppose, the perfect ballet does not exist, but certainly Frederick Ashton's *Symphonic Variations* is the nearest we will ever get to it. In this cool, limpid poem, music, movement and design are beautifully blended in a remote enchantment that never fails to lay a hushed trance of delight on the audience.

Nor is Clifford Curzon's recording, Decca LXT5547, perfection but for me it outstrips every other I have heard. He is not afraid of submerging himself into the orchestra as the score dictates or letting romanticism have its head in Grieg's *Piano Concerto* on the other side of the disc—choreographed by Vassili Lambrinos for the Festival Ballet. He is too great an artist to follow the general trend of pianists today, who appear to place brilliance and technique above everything. The recording may not be Decca's best but even so you will not be disappointed.

ANTHONY HOPKINS

There can be little doubt that Anthony Hopkins has helped thousands of listeners to the radio to understand and enjoy more fully many a concert. He has an easy way with him and a simplicity that enables the newest comer to grasp at least the basic idea in his explanation of various works. When it comes to a ballet like *Symphonic Variations*, the more you understand the music the more you will find in the choreography and its whole conception.

So to those who wish to learn I can recommend his Jupiter recording, jepOOC5, during which he deals with the work stage by stage. The recording of the piano is not always perfect—there is no orchestra—but that matters little. This disc, together with the excellent Curzon one reviewed above, will help many a ballet goer to a greater appreciation of the art they enjoy.

TAMARA KARSAVINA

Here is a voice from the past of one of the great Maryinsky ballerinas in the Golden Age of Ballet, Jupiter jepOC12, describing the training and traditions that were the basis of the Imperial Russian Ballet.

It is also a voice from the fabulous Diaghilev Period, for this great classical ballerina, upholder of tradition, was also an innovator and rebel against stagnation and meaningless conventions and one of the band, in 1909, who took Paris by storm and altered the whole course of ballet history.

But it is also very much a voice of the present, and always at the service of ballet in this country. Creator of most of the principal roles in the great Fokine ballets, Tamara Karsavina has coached a number of English dancers—notably Margot Fonteyn—in her parts, and today hands on her priceless heritage in innumerable lectures and demonstrations. A record to treasure.

THE NUTCRACKER

The suite from this famous ballet contains some of Tchaikovsky's most delightful music and has currently some fifteen recordings to its credit. So this recent issue from Pye, GGLOO47, has to stand up to many rivals, the most formidable of which is the delicately shaded performance by Sir Thomas Beecham on Philips SBR6213. Wilhelm Rohr is not a genius. He gives a very straight interpretation and this is even more marked in the other two works that are included—the dances from *Prince Igor* and Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance*. In these there is no room for standing on ceremony or pulling your punches but off with the gloves immediately. Nevertheless there is a certain pleasantness about this clearly recorded disc and its price is attractive.

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BOOK GUIDE

Gateway to the Dance. By Ruby Ginner. (Newman Neame, 30s.)

Ruby Ginner's interesting new book on Greek dancing appears very aptly at a time when there is renewed interest in ancient Greek myths as the basis for work in the theatre. Unlike her previous book (*The Revived Greek Dance*, 1933) which was largely concerned with the dance-technique taught by Ruby Ginner and her pupils, her new book is almost entirely devoted to the ancient Greek dance. Its most original and valuable feature is the examination of the dances associated with each of the main gods and with the nymphs: Miss Ginner takes little account of sociological and psychological studies of the gods and heroes to have appeared in recent years, but she writes of the gods important from a dancing point of view with spirit and fluency.

In one valuable section (pp. 48-49) she relates an experience of her own in a mountain village in Italy, when she saw a funeral ceremony very close to ancient Greek rites, and clearly a survival of something very old. Elsewhere she mentions that certain existing folk dances in Greece resemble ancient dances, but fails to develop this fascinating subject. In fact it is high time someone did some research on the innumerable folk dances of Greece, Macedonia, Turkey, Bulgaria, etc., which suggest a common origin in ancient Greece; by studying all these ancient survivals (both choreographically and musically) someone should be able to find out many things which would help us to interpret the writings of the Greeks about their dances and their representations of dancers on vases and in sculpture. Of one thing we may be certain: the ancient Greek dances had rhythms more strange and complex than those used by Miss Ginner in her reconstructions, which make use of relatively modern music.

A choreographer might find much to interest him in the Chapters 11 and 13, which deal with choric dancing in the theatre. These chapters are disappointingly brief in view of the vastness and importance of the subject—Miss Ginner does not seem aware of, e.g., Gregor's researches in this field—but what she does say is very much to the point.

In view of the size and scope of the book, the absence of an index is regrettable.

The Book of Ballet. By James Audsley. (Frederick Warne, 10s. 6d.)

There is no end to the simple introductions to ballet for young people. James Audsley, a journalist whose articles appear in such magazines as *Eagle* and *Girl* and whose "many and varied interests" include "Theatre, Sport and the Old West" (I quote from the blurb), takes on the art of ballet with considerable verve. Much of what he says is sound, and he avoids a number of mistakes common in books of this kind. He is good, for example, on the muddled use of such terms as "classical" and "romantic," and is aware that Lydia Sokolova was the first great English danseuse of modern times. But, like the others, he shows no knowledge of the important role played by Weaver in England at the beginning of the eighteenth century in the creation of the modern art of ballet, and his treatment of modern English ballets is desperately superficial and inadequate: Tudor, for example, emerges as the choreographer of *Gala Performance*. On the other hand considerable space is given to something as evanescent and insignificant as the visit of the Tcherina company.

The book is well illustrated with photographs and drawings, and is good value for the money. The drawing labelled *tour en l'air* (p. 102) shows in fact a *grand jeté en tournant*.

The Royal Ballet on Stage and Screen. *The Book of the Royal Ballet Film.* Edited by Maurice Moiseiwitsch and Eric Warman. (Heinemann, 18s.)

Being "the book of the film," this is essentially a souvenir—a glorified gala programme—and many people who enjoyed the film will like to own the book because of the number and quality of the full-page photographs (including three in colour). The text is of relatively minor interest, though Czinner contributes a useful short account of the technique used in filming (though why ignore the vital problem of editing?) and Ashton gives some of his ideas on choreography. There is a short biography of Margot Fonteyn, and the stories of the three ballets are told in detail.

FERNAU HALL.

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BALLET IN CUBA

reported by Rigoberto Barata in Havana

OUR ballet festival organised by the National Institute of the Industrie of Tourism took place in Havana from March 15th to April 2nd, opening with *Swan Lake* with Nina Timofeyeva and Boris Khokhlov in the principal roles accompanied by the Ballet of Cuba. *Swan Lake* was seen in Cuba for the first time in 1954 when it was produced by Mary Skeaping. Timofeyeva's Odette was a very sad and grieved maid, but her Odile showed her to better advantage. Aided by her strong technique, the hard movements of the Black Swan were entirely convincing, and the thirty-two fouettes left no doubt that this was ballet in its highest form. Although an admirable partner, Boris Khokhlov appeared rather forced in his manner.

Worthy of special note in the last performance danced by the two Russian stars were three young dancers of the Ballet of Cuba, Margarita de Saa, Mirtha Plá and Thatcher Clarke, who danced the Pas de Trois. Thatcher Clarke's variation was brilliant and he received much applause for his pirouettes, entrechats, cabrioles and tours en l'air, which he executed with mathematical precision.

The Ximenez-Vargas Spanish Ballet gave two performances on the 17th and 18th March, the same programme on each occasion. The best number was their *Sin Quererlo ni Buscarlo* (Petenera), with Mariá Alba, who, although an artist of grace and nobility, has not realised the full promise in her work. *Zapateado del Estampío* is a study in technique as danced by Roberto Ximenez, who with Manuel Vargas are well known in Cuba for their talented dancing. Although I enjoyed the programme, it fell rather flat

after the two previous nights' ballet. Nevertheless the company, though only a small one, did good work.

On the 21st March there was another entirely new programme. *Concerto*, with music by Vivaldi-Bach, choreography Alberto Alonso, was danced by Mirtha Plá and Thatcher Clarke. Miss Plá, a very young dancer with the promise of a brilliant career, has a beautiful figure and looks well on the stage, but she must still pay attention to the technique of the dance.

The second item on the programme was *Juana En Rouen*, music by Vaughan Williams, choreography by Anna Leontieva, with Alicia Alonso in the role of Juana. This role requires great acting ability from the ballerina, otherwise it must fail. Miss Alonso understood this and gave of her best, real actress that she is.

Nina Timofeyeva and Boris Khokhlov danced the pas de deux from *Les Sylphides*, with certain changes in the choreography which were unfamiliar to us. Miss Timofeyeva gave a gentle interpretation, with wonderful arm movements and a beautifully fluid pas de bourrée. Nevertheless, to my mind she does not achieve the ethereal effect of this role as we have seen it in stars such as Markova, Chauviré and Alonso. Boris Khokhlov, as partner to Timofeyeva, was perfectly in accord with her.

Despertar, although well cast, and with pleasing choreography and decor, just did not come off. With the exception of Alicia Alonso in the role of La Libertad, this modern ballet could have been for "wilies" or "sylphides," and even Miss Alonso could not bring to this the work of a prima

ballerina assoluta. Joaquin Bánegas gave a sincere interpretation of the role of El Ciudadano.

The corps de ballet have worked well in all the numbers on the programme.

On the 23rd March Alicia Alonso, partnered by Royes Fernandez, danced Giselle. What more can one say of Miss Alonso's creation of this role? An ingenuous peasant, sweet and delicate, in the first act discovering she is in love and giving herself to the joy of living. The madness scene, a real poem of love frustrated, without the stupid mannerisms affected by some ballerinas. As for the technical aspect, her neatness and wonderful equilibrium brought forth a storm of "Bravos" from the public.

In the second Act Miss Alonso was a real apparition of Giselle, with such an ethereal quality that she seemed to float over the stage, giving the impression that her feet never touched the floor. One of the greatest Giselles in our era, and, as her Albrecht, Royes Fernandez gave the role an interpretation of quality and warmth.

Mile. Timofeyeva was a brilliant Queen of the Wilies, with prodigious elevation, but although there were moments when she reached more deeply into the interpretation of the role, she never quite reached the highest projection of it. The corps de ballet gave excellent support as Wilies, especially the soloists; the same cannot be said of the orchestra.

Further performances include the Ballet of Bellas Artes of Mexico, the Ballet of Venezuela, and *Coppelia* with Alonso and Fernandez.

MONTE CARLO EASTER SEASON

by J. R. Farrington Ballet Today Correspondent

FOR our shorter than usual Easter Ballet Season Monsieur Eugène Grunberg presented the Ballet of the Belgrade National Theatre. Bringing around one hundred personnel from the Yugoslav capital, the company gave us two excellent programmes in the Salle Garnier and this without the assistance of world famous stars, as is usual here. In Dusan Ristic the company is fortunate in possessing an outstanding artist in décor and costume, with a fine sense of line and colour. Kresimir Baranovic and Oscar Banon conducted the experienced Monte Carlo Orchestra with a balletic sensibility that may well be envied by dancers elsewhere. I was pleased to note that this was duly recognized by the audience.

On the opening night, before the Prince and Princess of Monaco, the curtain rose on *Le Coeur de Pain d'Epice*, a gay and folkloric ballet set in a Croat village. Baranovic conducted his own appropriately tuneful music. The décor of Miomir Denic admirably backgrounded the colourful costumes of Milica Babie-Jovanic and the choreography of Dimitrije Parlic included some nicely proportioned ensembles. The petite and lively Bojana Peric danced the young girl with neat assurance, well partnered by the virile Branko Markovic. Altogether a most pleasing, if rather lengthy, ballet which at once established sympathetic liaison between stage and house.

Le Mandarin Merveilleux has been seen several times here, but I found the décor by Ristic much the most effective. Dusanka

Sifnios vividly portrayed the changing emotions of the girl and was well supported by Zarko Prebil as the Mandarin. Well produced and convincingly danced this ballet deservedly received an ovation. With many choristers of the Monte Carlo Opera and a large corps de ballet on the somewhat small stage I felt that the vigorous *Dances Polovtsiennes* never really got going and that there was not the space fully to develop the ensembles. This is no reflection on the dancers; they just could not loosen up.

Belgrade opened the second programme with the second act of *Giselle*. I have seen many versions of this here by national companies and each produces something new in interpretation. As Giselle Dusanka Sifnios showed fine fluent technique with admirable port de bras. She is a dancer whom it is a joy to watch. I would like to have seen a deeper expression of the betrayed girl's love and forgiveness. Dancing alone, however good, cannot entirely convey this. Zarko Prebil, as Albert, was somewhat hesitant and unimpressive in the famous entry and then, though tall and muscular, proceeded to dance with surprising elevation and finish. Gradimir Hadzi-Slavkovic dramatically portrayed the gradual exhaustion of the wretched Hilarion in his dance to death. Vera Kostic queened the Wilies with distinction.

Rencontre à Louisville, modern American in construction, is actually to theme and choreography by Vera Kostic and music by Jacques Ibert, with effective geometric

décor by Ristic. Another railway station episode, built round the brief idyll of a sandwichman, Marjan Jagust, and a girl traveller, Rut Parnel, this one act ballet, set in the Charleston days of 1925, proved a riot of lively and amusing dancing. Soldiers, sailors, Negroes and all sorts of travellers joined in the fun. Entertaining and very good of its kind.

To close the Season came *La Reine des Isles*, a three act ballet by André Bol to music by Maurice Thiriet, choreography by Parlic and décor by Ristic. The story unfolds in the French tropical island of Saint-Domingue in 1802, where the naughty and ebullient Josephine Bonaparte is first lady. Full advantage was taken of the tropical setting to introduce gay costumes and lively dances by courtiers, sailors and an enviably large staff of mulatto servants. Ljiljana Dulovic was bewitchingly naughty as Josephine and Vera Kostic as Madame de Lancival, alternatively shocked and flirtatious, danced with vivid expression. Bojana Peric and Branko Markovic as the mulattos Mayanna and Payano danced with uninhibited abandon. With music very appropriate to the theme I found this ballet most satisfying.

Belgrade National Theatre Ballet certainly came up to the standard we expect here. The company is nicely balanced with a selection of good soloists and a well trained corps de ballet. We all enjoyed our Easter Season.

Ballet in Cuba

SWAN LAKE

Below:
The Pas de Trois
The Pas de Six

Right:
Alicia Alonso as Odette (Act 2)
and
Odile (Act 3) with Igor Youskevitch
The Six Princesses in Act 3.





Left:
Maya Plisetskaya in the role of Odile in the ballet *Swan Lake*.

Above:
As Mistress of the Copper Mountain in Sergei Prokofiev's ballet *The Stone Flower*. The role of Danila is taken by Nikolai Fadeychev.

CAREERS IN PICTURES

Maya Plisetskaya of the Bolshoi Ballet

MAYA PLISETSKAYA was born into an artistic family. Her mother was a former film actress; her uncle, Asaf Messerer, a famous dancer and teacher; her other uncle, Azarii Azarin, a well-known actor; one aunt, Sulamith Messerer, was a well-known ballerina and teacher, another—Elizaveta Messerer—an actress. And to make the picture complete two of her brothers—Alexei and Azarii—are also members of the Bolshoi Theatre's ballet company.

Maya was put in a ballet school in spite of the fact that she did not seem to have any of the special requirements that go to make a dancer. Her arms and legs were too long, and her height and gawkinsness showed no promise of future gracefulness.

Gradually, however, her body acquired softer lines. She developed a broad stride and leap, her arms grew expressive, and the gawkinsness of the adolescent turned into the proud vigour of a strong and passionate woman.

While studying in the seventh class of ballet school she performed the leading part in *Paquita* and was thereafter spoken of as a promising ballerina.

In 1943 she finished her studies at the ballet school under Yelizaveta Gerdt, a ballet teacher who was noted for developing in her pupils a noble style of dancing.

The young ballerina also highly benefited from her training under the famous ballet teacher, A. Y. Vaganova, who taught her the very difficult part of Masha in *The Nutcracker*. Masha was Maya's first role on the stage—her debut.

She also studied under her aunt, Sulamith Messerer, and has since been attending Asaf Messerer's class with the other leading ballerinas

of the Bolshoi Theatre.

During her first season Plisetskaya danced many parts with invariable success. Her roles included the Violante Fairy and Lilac Fairy in *Sleeping Beauty*, and later Aurora in the same ballet; the Queen of the Driads in *Don Quixote*; Fresca in the old version of *The Humpbacked Horse*; the Bell Dance in *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*; Myrtha in *Giselle*, and a leading part in *Chopiniana*.

None of her young contemporaries could boast of such a large number of parts and numbers in their first season.

Plisetskaya is endowed not only with excellent natural gifts and technique, but a fine professional memory. No wonder she learned so many different parts in so brief a period!

Hers is a vivid, original and strong individuality. It seems that nature herself created her for ballet stardom. She has a proud stance, and every one of her movements and pas are impetuous, powerful and compelling.

Kasyan Goleisovsky, the well-known choreographer, wrote of her: "The contrasting qualities of her gifts are elemental. We now see her as a Bacchante, spent with passion; now as the tender Psyche born of Canova's great inspiration; now as Aurora of the French fairy tale in which she incarnated the exquisite music of Tchaikovsky . . . Her brilliant art is diverse in character. She can be compared both with the flaming crown of the sunset and the twinkling of a nocturnal star."

There is nothing surprising in the fact that the choreographer working with Plisetskaya chose such colourful and sumptuous epithets with which to describe her.



As Zarema in *The Fountain of Bakhchisrai*.

by BORIS LVOV-ANOKHIN

Such is her dancing, her style—highly romantic and “decorative.”

Her technique—the famous leaps and plasticity of her strong arms all help to produce a brilliant effect. Even in Saint-Saen's *Dying Swan* she loses none of her austere grandeur.

This “decorative” quality of Plisetskaya's dancing has suited her remarkably for her roles in operas. Her dances blend organically with the rich picturesque fabric of the opera productions.

Her darting “Needle-Fish” in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko* conveys the lovely beauty of the fairy Sea-Bottom scene. In the Dance of the Persian Slave-Maidens in Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*, she captivates her audiences with the indolent, exotic charm of her movements. In the Walpurgis Night scene of *Faust* she is a wild red-haired Bacchante worthy of Rubens' brush.

With her part of Raymonda she became a leading ballerina of the Bolshoi Theatre.

The melodic richness of Glazunov's music, its “ornamentality” and brilliance were excellently suited to Plisetskaya's gifts. She created a very expressive image of the beautiful, proud and incorruptible girl.

In her plasticity, there are hardly any vestiges of studied precision. Her dances at times manifest a negligence born of natural talent, the sweeping scope of a broad and headstrong nature. Not only does her brilliant dancing amaze you, it stirs and grips you as well.

Her dances are all charged with passion. Even the image of the spectral, coldly brilliant Myrtha in *Giselle* has a glimmer of passion in it, a poisonous jealousy of Giselle and her undying love.

Plisetskaya's dances are full of great expressiveness and élan. Her best roles are those of imperious and proud beauties.

Her Odette in *Swan Lake* is a real Queen of the Swans. As the Black Swan—the cruel Odile—she conveys the sinister hauteur and sneering triumph of the seductress. Her great burning eyes hypnotize the Prince, and each royal gesture of her arms is like the cryptic sign of an enchantress. The steely glint of her eyes, the proud twist of her lips, the vigorous movements of her body cast a spell over her victim.

When you see her as Myrtha, the ruthless Queen of the Wilis, in *Giselle* you are reminded of Heine's poetic words:

“... The young brides, dead before their weddings... clad in their bridal garments, crowned with flowers, the deathly pallor of their hands decorated with rings, smiling terribly they dance, the Wilis, with compelling beauty in the moonlight, whirling swifter and more passionately as they feel that the hour of their dance is coming to a close and they must once again descend into their ice-cold graves.”

Plisetskaya as the pale and haughty Myrtha was indeed compellingly beautiful and ruthless in her vengeance.

In her interpretation of the Khan Girei's forsaken wife Zarema (*The Fountain of Bakhchisrai*), Plisetskaya vividly conveys not only



In the role of Aegina in A. Khatchaturyan's ballet *Spartacus* produced by the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

her pangs of jealousy, the pain and yearning of a loving heart, but also incensed pride and the resolve to fight to the end for her happiness.

In the snaky movements of her flexible expressive arms is hidden a whole world of languor, desire and guile.

As the Mistress of the Copper Mountain (*The Stone Flower*) she skilfully combines the insinuating, slippery and darting movements of a lizard with the imperiousness of a queenly enchantress. Beneath her outer cryptic coolness you discern the violent passion, pain and jealousy of a rejected woman.

Plisetskaya brilliantly coped with the difficult role of Quiteria in *Don Quixote*. Her Spanish girl is spirited, arch and vivacious, and dances with scintillating virtuosity. As in the part of Laurencia in A. Krein's ballet of that name, the ballerina combines the utter gracefulness of a classical dancer with the fiery temperament of the Spanish dances, bubbling with verve and frankly passionate.

At present Muscovites are awaiting her appearance as the Tsar Maiden in the new ballet, *The Humpbacked Horse*. The music for it was written by her husband, the young and talented composer, Rodion Shchedrin.

She was unable to dance in the première performance because of an injured knee, but she sat in a box, and was excited no less than if she had been dancing herself, for it was her husband's début in the Bolshoi Theatre as a ballet composer.

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